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THE WORKS
OF
DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI



D. G. R. Pitti.

From a Photograph by Downey 1862

THE WORKS
OF
DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

EDITED
WITH PREFACE AND NOTES
BY
WILLIAM M. ROSSETTI

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

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DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
DIED 9 APRIL 1882 AGED 53
FRANCES MARY LAVINIA ROSSETTI
DIED 8 APRIL 1886 AGED 85

TO
THE MOTHER'S SACRED MEMORY
THIS COLLECTED EDITION OF
THE SON'S WORKS
IS DEDICATED BY
THE SURVIVING SON AND BROTHER
W M R

PREFACE

THE most adequate mode of prefacing the Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as of most authors, would probably be to offer a broad general view of his writings, and to analyse with some critical precision his relation to other writers, contemporary or otherwise, and the merits and defects of his performances. In this case, as in how few others, one would also have to consider in what degree his mind worked consentaneously or diversely in two several arts—the art of poetry and the art of painting. But the hand of a brother is not the fittest to undertake any work of this scope. My preface will not therefore deal with themes such as these, but will be confined to minor matters, which may nevertheless be relevant also within their limits. And first may come a very brief outline of the few events of an outwardly uneventful life.

Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti, who, at an early stage of his professional career, modified his name into Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was born on 12th May 1828, at No. 38 Charlotte Street (now 110 Hallam Street), Portland Place, London. In blood he was three-fourths Italian, and only one-fourth English; being on the father's side wholly Italian (Abruzzese), and on the mother's side half Italian (Tuscan) and half English. His father was Gabriele Rossetti, born in 1783 at Vasto, in the Abruzzi, Adriatic coast, in the then kingdom of Naples. Gabriele Rossetti (died 1854) was a man of letters, a custodian of ancient bronzes in the Museo Borbonico of Naples, and a poet; he distinguished himself by patriotic lays which fostered the popular movement resulting in the grant of a constitution by Ferdinand I. of Naples in 1820. The King, after the fashion of Bourbons and tyrants, revoked the constitution in 1821, and persecuted the abettors of it, and Rossetti had to escape for his freedom, or perhaps even for his life. He settled in London in 1824, married, and

became Professor of Italian in King's College, London, publishing also various works of bold speculation in the way of Dantesque commentary and exposition. His wife was Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori (died 1886), daughter of Gaetano Polidori (died 1853), a teacher of Italian and literary man who had in early youth been secretary to the poet Alfieri, and who published various books, including a complete translation of Milton's poems. Frances Polidori was English on the side of her mother, whose maiden name was Pierce. The family of Rossetti and his wife consisted of four children, born in four successive years—Maria Francesca (died 1876), Dante Gabriel, William Michael, and Christina Georgina (died 1894). Few more affectionate husbands and fathers have lived, and no better wife and mother, than Gabriele and Frances Rossetti. The means of the family were always strictly moderate, and became scanty towards 1843, when the father's health began to fail. In 1842 (or perhaps 1841) Dante Gabriel left King's College School, where he had learned Latin, French, and a beginning of Greek; and he entered upon the study of the art of painting, to which he had from earliest childhood exhibited a very marked bent. After a while he was admitted to the school of the Royal Academy, but never proceeded beyond its antique section. In 1848 Rossetti co-operated with two of his fellow-students in painting, John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt, and with the sculptor Thomas Woolner, in forming the so-called Præraphaelite Brotherhood. There were three other members of the Brotherhood—James Collinson, Frederic George Stephens, and the present writer. Ford Madox Brown, the historical painter, was known to Rossetti a little before the Præraphaelite scheme was started, and bore an important part both in directing his studies and in upholding the movement, but he did not think fit to join the Brotherhood in any direct or complete sense. Through a fellow-painter, Walter Howell Deverell, Rossetti came to know Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, daughter of a Sheffield cutler, herself a milliner's assistant, gifted with some artistic and some poetic faculty: in the Spring of 1860, after a long engagement, they married. Their wedded life was of short duration, as she died in February 1862, having meanwhile given birth to a still-born child. For several years up to this date Rossetti, designing and painting many works, in oil-

colour or as yet more frequently in water-colour, had resided at No. 14 Chatham Place, Blackfriars Bridge, a line of street now demolished. In the autumn of 1862 he removed to No. 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. At first certain apartments in the house were occupied by Mr. George Meredith the novelist, Mr. Swinburne the poet, and myself. This arrangement did not last long, although I myself remained a partial inmate of the house up to 1873. My brother continued domiciled in Cheyne Walk until his death; but from 1871 he was sometimes away at Kelmscot manorhouse, in Oxfordshire, not far from Lechlade, occupied jointly by himself, and by the poet Mr. William Morris with his family. From the autumn of 1872 till the summer of 1874 he was wholly settled at Kelmscot, scarcely visiting London at all. He then returned to London, and Kelmscot passed out of his ken.

In the early months of 1850 the members of the Præraphælite Brotherhood, with the co-operation of some friends, brought out a short-lived magazine named *The Germ* (afterwards *Art and Poetry*); here appeared the first verses and the first prose published by Rossetti, including *The Blessed Damozel* and *Hand and Soul*. In 1856 he contributed a little to *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, printing there *The Burden of Nineveh* and *Staff and Scrip*. In 1861, during his married life, he published his volume of translations *The Early Italian Poets*, now entitled *Dante and his Circle*. By the time therefore of the death of his wife he had a certain restricted yet far from inconsiderable reputation as a poet, along with his recognized position as a painter—a non-exhibiting painter, for, after the first two or three years of his professional course, he adhered with practical uniformity to the plan of abstaining from exhibition altogether. He had contemplated bringing out in or about 1862 a volume of original poems; but, in the grief and dismay which overwhelmed him in losing his wife, he determined to sacrifice to her memory this long-cherished project, and he buried in her coffin the manuscripts which would have furnished forth the volume. With the lapse of years he came to see that, as a final settlement of the matter, this was neither obligatory nor desirable; so in 1869 the manuscripts were disinterred, and in 1870 his volume named *Poems* was issued. For some considerable while it was hailed with general and lofty praise, chequered by only moderate stricture or demur; but late

in 1871 Mr. Robert Buchanan published under a pseudonym, in the *Contemporary Review*, a very hostile article named *The Fleshly School of Poetry*, attacking the poems on literary and more especially on moral grounds. The article, in an enlarged form, was afterwards reissued as a pamphlet. The assault produced on Rossetti an effect altogether disproportionate to its intrinsic importance; indeed, it developed in his character an excess of sensitiveness and of distempered brooding which his nearest relatives and friends had never before surmised,—for hitherto he had on the whole had an ample sufficiency of high spirits, combined with a certain underlying gloominess or abrupt moodiness of nature and outlook. Unfortunately there was in him already only too much of morbid material on which this venom of detraction was to work. For some years the state of his eyesight had given very grave cause for apprehension, he himself fancying from time to time that the evil might end in absolute blindness, a fate with which our father had been formidably threatened in his closing years. From this or other causes insomnia had ensued, coped with by far too free a use of chloral, which may have begun towards the spring of 1870. In the summer of 1872 he had a dangerous crisis of illness; and from that time forward, but more especially from the middle of 1874, he became secluded in his habits of life, and often depressed, fanciful, and gloomy. Not indeed that there were no intervals of serenity, even of brightness; for in fact he was often genial and pleasant, and a most agreeable companion with as much *bonhomie* as acuteness for wiling an evening away. He continued also to prosecute his pictorial work with ardour and diligence, and at times he added to his product as a poet. The second of his original volumes, *Ballads and Sonnets*, was published in the autumn of 1881. About the same time he sought change of air and scene in the Vale of St. John, near Keswick, Cumberland; but he returned to town more shattered in health and in mental tone than he had ever been before. In December a shock of a quasi-paralytic character struck him down. He rallied sufficiently to remove to Birchington-on-Sea, near Margate. The hand of death was then upon him, and was to be relaxed no more. The last stage of his maladies was uræmia. Tended by his mother and his sister Christina, with the constant companionship at Birchington of Mr. Hall Caine, and in the

presence likewise of Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, Mr. Frederic Shields, and myself, he died on Easter Sunday, April 9th 1882. His sister-in-law, the daughter of Madox Brown, arrived immediately after his latest breath had been drawn. He lies buried in the churchyard of Birchington.

Few brothers were more constantly together, or shared one another's feelings and thoughts more intimately, in childhood, boyhood, and well on into mature manhood, than Dante Gabriel and myself. I have no idea of limning his character here at any length, but will define a few of its leading traits. He was always and essentially of a dominant turn, in intellect and in temperament a leader. He was impetuous and vehement, and necessarily therefore impatient; easily angered, easily appeased, although the embittered feelings of his later years obscured this amiable quality to some extent; constant and helpful as a friend where he perceived constancy to be reciprocated; free-handed and heedless of expenditure, whether for himself or for others; in family affection warm and equable, and (except in relation to our mother, for whom he had a fondling love) not demonstrative. Never on stilts in matters of the intellect or of aspiration, but steeped in the sense of beauty, and loving, if not always practising, the good; keenly alive also to the laughable as well as the grave or solemn side of things; superstitious in grain, and anti-scientific to the marrow. Throughout his youth and early manhood I considered him to be markedly free from vanity, though certainly well equipped in pride; the distinction between these two tendencies was less definite in his closing years. Extremely natural and therefore totally unaffected in tone and manner, with the naturalism characteristic of Italian blood; good-natured and hearty, without being complaisant or accommodating; reserved at times, yet not haughty; desultory enough in youth, diligent and persistent in maturity; self-centred always, and brushing aside whatever traversed his purpose or his bent. He was very generally and very greatly liked by persons of extremely diverse character; indeed, I think it can be no exaggeration to say that no one ever disliked him. Of course I do not here confound the question of liking a man's personality with that of approving his conduct out-and-out.

Of his manner I can perhaps convey but a vague impression.

I have said that it was natural ; it was likewise eminently easy, and even of the free-and-easy kind. There was a certain British bluntness, streaking the finely poised Italian suppleness and facility. As he was thoroughly unconventional, caring not at all to fall in with the humours or prepossessions of any particular class of society, or to conciliate or approximate the socially distinguished, there was little in him of any veneer or varnish of elegance ; none the less he was courteous and well-bred, meeting all sorts of persons upon equal terms—*i.e.*, upon his own terms ; and I am satisfied that those who are most exacting in such matters found in Rossetti nothing to derogate from the standard of their requirements. In habit of body he was indolent and lounging, disinclined to any prescribed or trying exertion of any sort, and very difficult to stir out of his ordinary groove, yet not wanting in active promptitude whenever it suited his liking. He often seemed totally unoccupied, especially of an evening ; no doubt the brain was busy enough.

The appearance of my brother was to my eye rather Italian than English, though I have more than once heard it said that there was nothing observable to bespeak foreign blood. He was of rather low middle stature, say five feet seven and a half, like our father ; and, as the years advanced, he resembled our father not a little in a characteristic way, yet with highly obvious divergences. Meagre in youth, he was at times decidedly fat in mature age. The complexion, clear and warm, was also dark, but not dusky or sombre. The hair was dark and somewhat silky ; the brow grandly spacious and solid ; the full-sized eyes blueish-grey ; the nose shapely, decided, and rather projecting, with an aquiline tendency and large nostrils, and perhaps no detail in the face was more noticeable at a first glance than the very strong indentation at the spring of the nose below the forehead ; the mouth moderately well-shaped, but with a rather thick and unmoulded under-lip ; the chin unremarkable ; the line of the jaw, after youth was passed, full, rounded, and sweeping ; the ears well-formed and rather small than large. His lips were wide, his hands and feet small ; the hands very much those of the artist or author type, white, delicate, plump, and soft as a woman's. His gait was resolute and rapid, his general aspect compact and determined, the prevailing expression of the face that of a fiery and dictatorial mind concentrated

into repose. Some people regarded Rossetti as eminently handsome ; few, I think, would have refused him the epithet of well-looking. It rather surprises me to find from Mr. Caine's book of *Recollections* that that gentleman, when he first saw Rossetti in 1880, considered him to look full ten years older than he really was,—namely, to look as if sixty-two years old. To my own eye nothing of the sort was apparent. He wore moustaches from early youth, shaving his cheeks ; from 1873 or thereabouts he grew whiskers and beard, moderately full and auburn-tinted, as well as moustaches. His voice was deep and harmonious ; in the reading of poetry, remarkably rich, with rolling swell and musical cadence.

My brother was very little of a traveller ; he disliked the interruption of his ordinary habits of life, and the flurry or discomfort, involved in locomotion ; moreover, he was a bad sailor. In boyhood he knew Boulogne : he was in Paris three or four times, and twice visited some principal cities of Belgium. This was the whole extent of his foreign travelling. He crossed the Scottish border more than once and knew various parts of England pretty well—Hastings, Bath, Oxford, Matlock, Stratford-on-Avon, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Bognor, Herne Bay ; Kelmscot, Keswick, and Birchington-on-Sea have been already mentioned. From 1878 or thereabouts he became, until he went to the neighbourhood of Keswick, an absolute home-keeping recluse, never even straying outside the large garden of his own house, except to visit from time to time our mother in the central part of London.

From an early period of life he had a large circle of friends, and could always have commanded any amount of intercourse with any number of ardent or kindly well-wishers, had he but felt elasticity or cheerfulness of mind enough for the purpose. I should do injustice to my own feelings if I were not to mention here some of his leading friends. First and foremost I name Mr. Madox Brown, his chief intimate throughout life, on the unexhausted resources of whose affection and converse he drew incessantly for long years ; they were at last separated by the removal of Mr. Brown to Manchester, for the purpose of painting the Town Hall frescoes. The Præraphaelites—Millais, Hunt, Woolner, Stephens, Collinson—were on terms of unbounded familiarity with him in youth ; owing to death or other causes, he lost sight eventually of all

of them except Mr. Stephens. Mr. William Bell Scott was, like Mr. Brown, a close friend from a very early period until the last ; Scott being both poet and painter, there was a strict bond of affinity between him and Rossetti. Mr. Ruskin was extremely intimate with my brother from 1854 till about 1865, and was of material help to his professional career. As he rose towards celebrity, Rossetti knew Burne Jones, and through him Morris and Swinburne, all staunch and fervently sympathetic friends. Mr. Shields was a rather later acquaintance, who soon became an intimate, equally respected and cherished. Then Mr. Hueffer the musical critic (afterwards a close family connection, editor of the Tauchnitz edition of Rossetti's works), and Dr. Hake the poet. Through the latter my brother came to know Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, whose intellectual companionship and incessant assiduity of friendship did more than anything else towards assuaging the discomforts and depression of his closing years. In the latest period the most intimate among new acquaintances were Mr. William Sharp and Mr. Hall Caine, both of them known to Rossettian readers as his biographers. Nor should I omit to speak of the extremely friendly relation in which my brother stood to some of the principal purchasers of his pictures—Mr. Leathart, Mr. Rae, Mr. Leyland, Mr. Graham, Mr. Valpy, Mr. Turner, and his early associate Mr. Boyce. Other names crowd upon me—James Hannay, John Tupper, Patmore, Thomas and John Seddon, Mrs. Bodichon, Browning, John Marshall, Tebbs, Mrs. Gilchrist, Miss Boyd, Sandys, Whistler, Joseph Knight, Fairfax Murray, Mr. and Mrs. Stillman, Treffry Dunn, Lord and Lady Mount-Temple, Oliver Madox Brown, the Marstons, father and son—but I forbear.

Before proceeding to some brief account of the sequence etc. of my brother's writings, it may be worth while to speak of the poets who were particularly influential in nurturing his mind and educing its own poetic endowment. The first poet with whom he became partially familiar was Shakespear. Then followed the usual boyish fancies for Walter Scott and Byron. The Bible was deeply impressive to him, perhaps above all Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Apocalypse. Byron gave place to Shelley when my brother was about sixteen years of age ; and Mrs. Browning and the old English or Scottish ballads rapidly ensued. It may have been towards this

date, say 1845, that he first seriously applied himself to Dante, and drank deep of that inexhaustible well-head of poesy and thought ; for the Florentine, though familiar to him as a name, and in some sense as a pervading penetrative influence, from earliest childhood, was not really assimilated until boyhood was practically past. Bailey's *Festus* was enormously relished about the same time—read again and yet again ; also *Faust*, Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset (and along with them a swarm of French novelists), and Keats, whom my brother for the most part, though not without some compunctious visitings now and then, truly preferred to Shelley. The only classical poet whom he took to in any degree worth speaking of was Homer, the *Odyssey* considerably more than the *Iliad*. Tennyson reigned along with Keats, and Edgar Poe and Coleridge along with Tennyson. In the long run he perhaps enjoyed and revered Coleridge beyond any other modern poet whatsoever ; but Coleridge was not so distinctly or separately in the ascendant, at any particular period of youth, as several of the others. Blake likewise had his peculiar meed of homage, and Charles Wells, the influence of whose prose style, in the *Stories after Nature*, I trace to some extent in Rossetti's *Hand and Soul*. Lastly came Browning, and for a time, like the serpent-rod of Moses, swallowed up all the rest. This was still at an early stage of life ; for I think the year 1847 cannot certainly have been passed before my brother was deep in Browning. The readings or fragmentary recitations of *Bells and Pomegranates*, *Paracelsus*, and above all *Sordello*, are something to remember from a now distant past. My brother lighted upon *Pauline* (published anonymously) in the British Museum, copied it out, recognized that it must be Browning's, and wrote to the great poet at a venture to say so, receiving a cordial response, followed by a genial and friendly intercourse for several years. One prose-work of great influence upon my brother's mind, and upon his product as a painter, must not be left unspecified—Malory's *Mort d'Arthur*, which he knew to some extent in boyhood, and which engrossed him towards 1856. The only poet whom I feel it needful to add to the above is Chatterton. In the last two or three years of his life my brother entertained an abnormal—I think an exaggerated—admiration of Chatterton. It appears to me that (to use a very hackneyed phrase) he “evolved this from his inner

consciousness " at that late period ; certainly in youth and early manhood he had no such feeling. He then read the poems of Chatterton with cursory glance and unexcited spirit, recognizing them as very singular performances for their date in English literature, and for the author's boyish years, but beyond that laying no marked stress upon them.

The reader may perhaps be surprised to find some names unmentioned in this list : I have stated the facts as I remember and know them. Chaucer, Spenser, the Elizabethan dramatists (other than Shakespear), Milton, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth, are unnamed. It should not be supposed that he read them not at all, or cared not for any of them ; but, if we except Chaucer in a rather loose way and (at a late period of life) Marlowe in some of his non-dramatic poems, they were comparatively neglected. Thomas Hood he valued highly ; also very highly Burns in mature years, but he was not a constant reader of the Scottish lyrist. Of Italian poets he earnestly loved none save Dante : Cavalcanti in his degree, and also Poliziano and Michelangelo—not Petrarca, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Tasso, or Leopardi, though in boyhood he delighted well enough in Ariosto. Of French poets, none beyond Hugo and Alfred de Musset ; except Villon, and partially Dumas, whose novels ranked among his favourite reading. In German poetry he read nothing currently in the original, although (as our pages bear witness) he had in earliest youth so far mastered the language as to make some translations. Calderon, in Fitzgerald's version, he admired deeply ; but this was only at a late date. He had no liking for the specialities of Scandinavian, nor indeed of Teutonic, thought and work, and little or no curiosity about Oriental—such as Indian, Persian, or Arabic—poetry. Any writing about devils, spectres, or the supernatural generally, whether in poetry or in prose, had always a fascination for him ; at one time, say 1844, his supreme delight was the blood-curdling romance of Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*.

I now pass to a specification of my brother's own writings. Of his merely childish or boyish performances I need have said nothing, were it not that they have been mentioned in other books regarding Rossetti. First then there was *The Slave*, a " drama " which he composed and wrote out in or about the seventh year of his age. It is of course simple nonsense. " Slave " and " traitor " were two words which

he found *passim* in Shakespear ; so he gave to his principal characters the names of Slave and Traitor. If what they do is meaningless, what they say (when they deviate from prose) is not exactly unmetrical. Towards his thirteenth year he began a romantic prose-tale named *Roderick and Rosalba*. I hardly think that he composed anything else prior to the ballad narrative *Sir Hugh the Heron*, founded on a tale by Allan Cunningham. Our grandfather printed it in 1843, which is some couple of years after the date of its composition. It is correctly enough versified, but has no merit, and little that could even be called promise. Soon afterwards a prose-tale named *Sorrentino*, in which the devil played a conspicuous part, was begun, and carried to some length ; it was of course boyish, but it must, I think, have shown some considerable degree of cleverness. In 1844 there was the translation of Bürger's *Lenore*, spirited and fairly efficient ; and in November 1845 was begun a translation of the *Nibelungenlied*, almost deserving (if my memory serves me) to be considered good. Several hundred lines of it must certainly have been written. My brother was by this time a practised and competent versifier, at any rate, and his mere prentice-work may count as finished.

Other original verse, not in any large quantity, succeeded, along with the version of *Der Arme Heinrich*, and the beginning of his translations from the early Italians. These must, I think, have been in full career in the first half of 1847, and may even have begun in 1845. They show a keen sensitiveness to whatsoever is poetic in the originals, and a sinuous strength and ease in providing English equivalents, with the command of a rich and romantic vocabulary. In his nineteenth year, or before 12th May 1847, he wrote *The Blessed Damozel*. As that is universally recognized as one of his typical or consummate productions, marking the high level of his faculty whether inventive or executive, I may here close this record of preliminaries ; the poems, with such slight elucidations as my notes supply, being left to speak for themselves. I will only add that for some while, more especially in the latter part of 1848 and in 1849, my brother practised his pen to no small extent in writing sonnets to *bouts-rimés*. He and I would sit together in our bare little room at the top of No. 50 Charlotte Street, I giving him the rhymes for a sonnet, and he me the rhymes for another ;

and we would write off our emulous exercises with considerable speed, he constantly the more rapid of the two. From five to eight minutes may have been the average time for one of his sonnets; not unfrequently more, and sometimes hardly so much. In fact, the pen scribbled away at its fastest. Several of his *bouts-rimés* sonnets still exist in my possession, a little touched up after the first draft: I present most of them in this re-edition. Some have a *faux air* of intensity of meaning, as well as of expression; but their real core of significance is necessarily small, the only wonder being how he could spin so deftly with so weak a thread. I may be allowed to mention that most of my own sonnets (and not sonnets alone) published in *The Germ* were *bouts-rimés* experiments such as above described. In poetic tone they are of course inferior to my brother's work of like fashioning; in point of sequence or self-congruity of meaning, the comparison might be less to my disadvantage.

Dante Rossetti's published works were as follows: three volumes, chiefly of poetry. I shall transcribe the title-pages *verbatim*.

(1^a) The Early Italian Poets from Ciullo d'Alcamo to Dante Alighieri (1100—1200—1300) in the Original Metres. Together with Dante's Vita Nuova. Translated by D. G. Rossetti. Part I. Poets chiefly before Dante. Part II. Dante and his Circle. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 65, Cornhill. 1861. The rights of translation and reproduction, as regards all editorial parts of this work, are reserved.

(1^b) Dante and his Circle, with the Italian Poets preceding him (1100—1200—1300). A Collection of Lyrics, edited, and translated in the original metres, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Revised and rearranged edition. Part I. Dante's Vita Nuova, &c. Poets of Dante's Circle. Part II. Poets chiefly before Dante. London: Ellis and White, 29, New Bond Street. 1874.

(2^a) Poems by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. London: F. S. Ellis, 33, King Street, Covent Garden. 1870.

(2^b) Poems by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. A new edition. London: Ellis and White, 29, New Bond Street. 1881.

(3) Ballads and Sonnets by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. London: Ellis and White, 29, New Bond Street, W. 1881.

The reader will understand that 1^b is essentially the same book as 1^a, but altered in arrangement, chiefly by inverting

the order in which the poems of Dante and of the Dantesque epoch, and those of an earlier period, are printed. In the present collection, I reprint 1^b, taking no further count of 1^a. The volume 2^b is to a great extent the same as 2^a, yet by no means identical with it. 2^a contained a section named *Sonnets and Songs, towards a work to be called "The House of Life."* In 1881, when 2^b and 3 were published simultaneously, *The House of Life* was completed, was made to consist solely of sonnets, and was transferred to 3; while the gap thus left in 2^b was filled up by other poems. This essential modification of *The House of Life* clearly governed my action.

It thus became impossible for me to reproduce 2^a: but the question had to be considered whether I should reprint 2^b and 3 exactly as they stood in 1881, adding after them a section of poems not hitherto printed in any one of my brother's volumes; or whether I should recast, in point of arrangement, the entire contents of 2^b and 3, inserting here and there, in their most appropriate sequence, the poems hitherto unprinted. I have chosen the latter alternative, as being in my own opinion the only arrangement which is thoroughly befitting for an edition of Collected Works. I am aware that some readers would have preferred to see the old order—*i.e.*, the order of 1881—retained, so that the two volumes of that year could be perused as they then stood. Indeed, one of my brother's friends, most worthy, whether as friend or as critic, to be consulted on such a subject, decidedly advocated that plan. On the other hand, I found my own view confirmed by my sister Christina, who, both as a member of the family and as a poetess, deserved an attentive hearing. The reader who inspects my table of contents will be readily able to follow the method of arrangement which is here adopted. I have divided the materials into Principal Poems, Miscellaneous Poems, Translations, and some minor headings; and have in each section arranged the poems—and the same has been done with the prose-writings—in the order of the dates of their composition. This order of date is certainly near to being correct; though some allowance, especially in the case of *The House of Life*, must be made for differences of period when the poems were begun and were brought into their final form. The few translations which were printed in 2^b (as also in 2^a) have been removed to follow on after 1^b.

There are two poems by my brother which I am unable

to include among his Collected Works. One of these is a grotesque ballad about a Dutchman, *Jan van Hunks*, begun at a very early date, and finished in his last illness. The other is a brace of sonnets, interesting in subject, and as being the very latest thing that he wrote. These works were presented as a gift of love and gratitude to Mr. Watts-Dunton, with whom it remains to publish them at his own discretion : he has already brought out *Jan van Hunks* in *The English Review*.

Dante Rossetti was a very fastidious writer, and, I might add, a very fastidious painter. He did not indeed " cudgel his brains " for the idea of a poem or the structure or diction of a stanza. He wrote out of a large fund or reserve of thought and consideration, which would culminate in a clear impulse or (as we say) an inspiration. In the execution he was always heedful and reflective from the first, and he spared no after-pains in clarifying and perfecting. He abhorred anything straggling, slipshod, profuse, or uncondensed. He often recurred to his old poems, and was reluctant to leave them merely as they were. A natural concomitant of this state of mind was a great repugnance to the notion of publishing, or of having published after his death, whatever he regarded as juvenile, petty, or inadequate. As editor of his Collected Works, I have had to regulate myself to a large extent by these feelings of his, whether my own entirely correspond with them or not. The amount of unpublished work which he left behind him was by no means large ; out of the moderate bulk I have been careful to select only such examples as I suppose that he would himself have approved for the purpose, or would, at any rate, not gravely have objected to. A few, which he might have objected to, figure as *Juvenilia*. Some details regarding the new items will be found among my notes. Some projects or arguments of poems which he never executed are also printed among his prose-writings. These particular projects had, I think, been practically abandoned by him in all the later years of his life ; but there was one subject which he had seriously at heart, and for which he had collected some materials, and he would perhaps have put it into shape had he lived a year or two longer—a ballad on the subject of Joan of Arc to match *The White Ship* and *The King's Tragedy*.

I have not unfrequently heard my brother say that he

considered himself more essentially a poet than a painter. To vary the form of expression, he thought that he had mastered the means of embodying poetical conceptions in the verbal and rhythmical vehicle more thoroughly than in form and design, perhaps more thoroughly than in colour.

WILLIAM M. ROSSETTI.

LONDON, *April* 1911.

I add here the dedications to Rossetti's volumes 1^a, 2^a, 2^b, and 3. The dedication to 1^b appears in its proper place.

1^a.—*The Early Italian Poets* :

Whatever is mine in this book is inscribed to my Wife.—
D. G. R. 1861.

2^a.—*Poems*, 1870 :

To William Michael Rossetti, these Poems, to so many of which, so many years back, he gave the first brotherly hearing, are now at last dedicated.

2^b.—*Poems*, 1881 :

Same dedication, adding the dates "1870—1881."

3.—*Ballads and Sonnets* :

To Theodore Watts, the Friend whom my verse won for me, these few more pages are affectionately inscribed.

In the Poems, 1881, appeared the ensuing "Advertisement" :

" 'Many poems in this volume were written between 1847 and 1853. Others are of recent date, and a few belong to the intervening period. It has been thought unnecessary to specify the earlier work, as nothing is included which the author believes to be immature.'

" The above brief note was prefixed to these poems when first published in 1870. They have now been for some time out of print.

" The fifty sonnets of *The House of Life*, which first appeared here, are now embodied with the full series in the volume entitled *Ballads and Sonnets*.

" The fragment of *The Bride's Prelude*, now first printed, was written very early, and is here associated with other work of the same date; though its publication in an unfinished form needs some indulgence."

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*The pieces marked thus * are now printed for the first time ; those marked † have appeared in print before, but are now first included in the Collected Works.*

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PRINCIPAL POEMS

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

THE blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven ;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even ;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn ;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers ;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers ;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face. . .
Nothing : the autumn-fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on ;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun ;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

PRINCIPAL POEMS

Around her, lovers, newly met
 'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
 Spoke evermore among themselves
 Their heart-remembered names;
 And the souls mounting up to God
 Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
 Out of the circling charm;
 Until her bosom must have made
 The bar she leaned on warm,
 And the lilies lay as if asleep
 Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
 Time like a pulse shake fierce
 Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
 Within the gulf to pierce
 Its path; and now she spoke as when
 The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
 Was like a little feather
 Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
 She spoke through the still weather.
 Her voice was like the voice the stars
 Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
 Strove not her accents there,
 Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
 Possessed the mid-day air,
 Strove not her steps to reach my side
 Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
 For he will come," she said.
 "Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
 Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
 Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
 And shall I feel afraid?"

"When round his head the aureole clings,
 And he is clothed in white,
 I'll take his hand and go with him
 To the deep wells of light;
 As unto a stream we will step down,
 And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
 Occult, withheld, untrod,
 Whose lamps are stirred continually
 With prayer sent up to God;
 And see our old prayers, granted, melt
 Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
 That living mystic tree
 Within whose secret growth the Dove
 Is sometimes felt to be,
 While every leaf that His plumes touch
 Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! we two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robcs for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,—only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
"All this is when he comes." She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

DANTE AT VERONA

Yea, thou shalt learn how salt his food who fares
Upon another's bread,—how steep his path
Who treadeth up and down another's stairs.
(*Div. Com. Parad. xvii.*)

Behold, even I, even I am Beatrice.
(*Div. Com. Purg. xxx.*)

OF Florence and of Beatrice
Servant and singer from of old,
O'er Dante's heart in youth had toll'd
The knell that gave his Lady peace;
And now in manhood flew the dart
Wherewith his City pierced his heart.

Yet if his Lady's home above
Was Heaven, on earth she filled his soul;
And if his City held control
To cast the body forth to rove,
The soul could soar from earth's vain throng,
And Heaven and Hell fulfil the song.

Follow his feet's appointed way;—
But little light we find that clears
The darkness of the exiled years.
Follow his spirit's journey:—nay,
What fires are blent, what winds are blown
On paths his feet may tread alone?

Yet of the twofold life he led
In chainless thought and fettered will
Some glimpses reach us,—somewhat still
Of the steep stairs and bitter bread,—
Of the soul's quest whose stern avow
For years had made him haggard now.

Alas! the Sacred Song whereto
Both heaven and earth had set their hand
Not only at Fame's gate did stand
Knocking to claim the passage through,
But toiled to ope that heavier door
Which Florence shut for evermore.

Shall not his birth's baptismal Town
One last high presage yet fulfil,
And at that font in Florence still
His forehead take the laurel-crown?
O God! or shall dead souls deny
The undying soul its prophecy?

Aye, 'tis their hour. Not yet forgot
The bitter words he spoke that day
When for some great charge far away
Her rulers his acceptance sought.
"And if I go, who stays?"—so rose
His scorn:—"and if I stay, who goes?"

"Lo! thou art gone now, and we stay"
(The curled lips mutter): "and no star
Is from thy mortal path so far
As streets where childhood knew the way.
To Heaven and Hell thy feet may win,
But thine own house they come not in."

Therefore, the loftier rose the song
To touch the secret things of God,
The deeper pierced the hate that trod
On base men's track who wrought the wrong;
Till the soul's effluence came to be
Its own exceeding agony.

Arriving only to depart,
From court to court, from land to land,
Like flame within the naked hand
His body bore his burning heart
That still on Florence strove to bring
God's fire for a burnt offering.

Even such was Dante's mood, when now,
Mocked for long years with Fortune's sport,
He dwelt at yet another court,
There where Verona's knee did bow
And her voice hailed with all acclaim
Can Grande della Scala's name.

As that lord's kingly guest awhile
His life we follow; through the days
Which walked in exile's barren ways,—
The nights which still beneath one smile
Heard through all spheres one song increase,—
"Even I, even I am Beatrice."

At Can La Scala's court, no doubt,
Due reverence did his steps attend;
The ushers on his path would bend
At ingoing as at going out;
The penmen waited on his call
At council-board, the grooms in hall.

And pages hushed their laughter down,
And gay squires stilled the merry stir,
When he passed up the dais-chamber
With set brows lordlier than a frown;
And tire-maids hidden among these
Drew close their loosened bodices,

Perhaps the priests, (exact to span
 All God's circumference,) if at whiles
 They found him wandering in their aisles,
 Grudged ghostly greeting to the man
 By whom, though not of ghostly guild,
 With Heaven and Hell men's hearts were fill'd.

And the court-poets (he, forsooth,
 A whole world's poet strayed to court !)
 Had for his scorn their hate's retort.
 He'd meet them flushed with easy youth,
 Hot on their errands. Like noon-flies
 They vexed him in the ears and eyes.

But at this court, peace still must wrench
 Her chaplet from the teeth of war :
 By day they held high watch afar,
 At night they cried across the trench ;
 And still, in Dante's path, the fierce
 Gaunt soldiers wrangled o'er their spears.

But vain seemed all the strength to him,
 As golden convoys sunk at sea
 Whose wealth might root out penury :
 Because it was not, limb with limb,
 Knit like his heart-strings round the wall
 Of Florence, that ill pride might fall.

Yet in the tiltyard, when the dust
 Cleared from the sundered press of knights
 Ere yet again it swoops and smites,
 He almost deemed his longing must
 Find force to wield that multitude
 And hurl that strength the way he would.

How should he move them,—fame and gain
 On all hands calling them at strife ?
 He still might find but his one life
 To give, by Florence counted vain ;
 One heart the false hearts made her doubt,
 One voice she heard once and cast out.

Oh ! if his Florence could but come,
 A lily-sceptred damsel fair,
 As her own Giotto painted her
 On many shields and gates at home,—
 A lady crowned, at a soft pace
 Riding the lists round to the dais :

Till where Can Grande rules the lists,
 As young as Truth, as calm as Force,
 She draws her rein now, while her horse
 Bows at the turn of the white wrists ;
 And when each knight within his stall
 Gives ear, she speaks and tells them all :

All the foul tale,—truth sworn untrue
 And falsehood's triumph. All the tale ?
 Great God ! and must she not prevail
 To fire them ere they heard it through,—
 And hand achieve ere heart could rest
 That high adventure of her quest ?

How would his Florence lead them forth,
 Her bridle ringing as she went;
 And at the last within her tent,
 'Neath golden lilies worship-worth,
 How queenly would she bend the while
 And thank the victors with her smile!

Also her lips should turn his way
 And murmur: "O thou tried and true,
 With whom I wept the long years through!
 What shall it profit if I say,
 Thee I remember? Nay, through thee
 All ages shall remember me."

Peace, Dante, peace! The task is long,
 The time wears short to compass it.
 Within thine heart such hopes may fit
 And find a voice in deathless song:
 But lo! as children of man's earth,
 Those hopes are dead before their birth.

Fame tells us that Verona's court
 Was a fair place. The feet might still
 Wander for ever at their will
 In many ways of sweet resort;
 And still in many a heart around
 The Poet's name due honour found.

Watch we his steps. He comes upon
 The women at their palm-playing.
 The conduits round the gardens sing
 And meet in scoops of milk-white stone,
 Where wearied damsels rest and hold
 Their hands in the wet spurt of gold.

One of whom, knowing well that he,
 By some found stern, was mild with them,
 Would run and pluck his garment's hem,
 Saying, "Messer Dante, pardon me,"—
 Praying that they might hear the song
 Which first of all he made, when young.

"Donne che avete" * . . . Thereunto
 Thus would he murmur, having first
 Drawn near the fountain, while she nurs'd
 His hand against her side: a few
 Sweet words, and scarcely those, half said:
 Then turned, and changed, and bowed his head.

For then the voice said in his heart,
 "Even I, even I am Beatrice";
 And his whole life would yearn to cease:
 Till having reached his room, apart
 Beyond vast lengths of palace-floor,
 He drew the arras round his door.

* Donne che avete intelletto d'amore:—the first canzone of the Vita Nuova.

At such times, Dante, thou hast set
 Thy forehead to the painted pane
 Full oft, I know; and if the rain
 Smote it outside, her fingers met
 Thy brow; and if the sun fell there,
 Her breath was on thy face and hair.

Then, weeping, I think certainly
 Thou hast beheld, past sight of eyne,—
 Within another room of thine
 Where now thy body may not be
 But where in thought thou still remain'st,—
 A window often wept against:

The window thou, a youth, hast sought,
 Flushed in the limpid eventime,
 Ending with daylight the day's rhyme
 Of her; where oftenwhiles her thought
 Held thee—the lamp untrimmed to write—
 In joy through the blue lapse of night.

At Can La Scala's court, no doubt,
 Guests seldom wept. It was brave sport,
 No doubt, at Can La Scala's Court,
 Within the palace and without;
 Where music, set to madrigals,
 Loitered all day through groves and halls.

Because Can Grande of his life
 Had not had six-and-twenty years
 As yet. And when the chroniclers
 Tell you of that Vicenza strife
 And of strifes elsewhere,—you must not
 Conceive for church-sooth he had got

Just nothing in his wits but war:
 Though doubtless 'twas the young man's joy
 (Grown with his growth from a mere boy.)
 To mark his "Viva Cane!" scare
 The foe's shut front, till it would reel
 All blind with shaken points of steel.

But there were places—held too sweet
 For eyes that had not the due veil
 Of lashes and clear lids—as well
 In favour as his saddle-seat:
 Breath of low speech he scorned not there
 Nor light cool fingers in his hair.

Yet if the child whom the sire's plan
 Made free of a deep treasure-chest
 Scoffed it with ill-conditioned jest,—
 We may be sure too that the man
 Was not mere thews, nor all content
 With lewdness swathed in sentiment.

So you may read and marvel not
 That such a man as Dante—one
 Who, while Can Grande's deeds were done,
 Had drawn his robe round him and thought—
 Now at the same guest-table far'd
 Where keen Uguccio wiped his beard.*

* Uguccione della Faggiuola, Dante's former protector, was now his fellow-guest at Verona.

Through leaves and trellis-work the sun
 Left the wine cool within the glass,—
 They feasting where no sun could pass :
 And when the women, all as one,
 Rose up with brightened cheeks to go,
 It was a comely thing, we know.

But Dante recked not of the wine ;
 Whether the women stayed or went,
 His visage held one stern intent :
 And when the music had its sign
 To breathe upon them for more ease,
 Sometimes he turned and bade it cease.

And as he spared not to rebuke
 The mirth, so oft in council he
 To bitter truth bore testimony :
 And when the crafty balance shook
 Well poised to make the wrong prevail,
 Then Dante's hand would turn the scale.

And if some envoy from afar
 Sailed to Verona's sovereign port
 For aid or peace, and all the court
 Fawned on its lord, " the Mars of war,
 Sole arbiter of life and death,"—
 Be sure that Dante saved his breath.

And Can La Scala marked askance
 These things, accepting them for shame
 And scorn, till Dante's guestship came
 To be a peevish sufferance :
 His host sought ways to make his days
 Hateful ; and such have many ways.

There was a Jester, a foul lout
 Whom the court loved for graceless arts ;
 Sworn scholiast of the bestial parts
 Of speech ; a ribald mouth to shout
 In Folly's horny tympanum
 Such things as make the wise man dumb.

Much loved, him Dante loathed. And so,
 One day when Dante felt perplexed
 If any day that could come next
 Were worth the waiting for or no,
 And mute he sat amid their din,—
 Can Grande called the Jester in.

Rank words, with such, are wit's best wealth.
 Lords mouthed approval ; ladies kept
 Twittering with clustered heads, except
 Some few that took their trains by stealth
 And went. Can Grande shook his hair
 And smote his thighs and laughed i' the air.

Then, facing on his guest, he cried,—
 " Say, Messer Dante, how it is
 I get out of a clown like this
 More than your wisdom can provide."
 And Dante : " 'Tis man's ancient whim
 That still his like seems good to him."

Also a tale is told, how once,
 At clearing tables after meat,
 Piled for a jest at Dante's feet
 Were found the dinner's well-picked bones;
 So laid, to please the banquet's lord,
 By one who crouched beneath the board.

Then smiled Can Grande to the rest:—
 "Our Dante's tuneful mouth indeed
 Lacks not the gift on flesh to feed!"
 "Fair host of mine," replied the guest,
 "So many bones you'd not descry
 If so it chanced the *dog* were I."*

But wherefore should we turn the grout
 In a drained cup, or be at strife
 From the worn garment of a life
 To rip the twisted ravel out?
 Good needs expounding; but of ill
 Each hath enough to guess his fill.

They named him Justicer-at-Law:
 Each month to bear the tale in mind
 Of hues a wench might wear unfin'd
 And of the load an ox might draw;
 To cavil in the weight of bread
 And to see purse-thieves gibbeted.

And when his spirit wove the spell
 (From under even to over-noon
 In converse with itself alone,)—
 As high as Heaven, as low as Hell,—
 He would be summoned and must go:
 For had not Gian stabbed Giacomo?

Therefore the bread he had to eat
 Seemed brackish, less like corn than tares;
 And the rush-strown accustomed stairs
 Each day were steeper to his feet;
 And when the night-vigil was done,
 His brows would ache to feel the sun.

Nevertheless, when from his kin
 There came the tidings how at last
 In Florence a decree was pass'd
 Whereby all banished folk might win
 Free pardon, so a fine were paid
 And act of public penance made,—

This Dante writ in answer thus,
 Words such as these: "That clearly they
 In Florence must not have to say,—
 The man abode aloof from us
 Nigh fifteen years, yet lastly skulk'd
 Hither to candleshrif and mulct.

* "*Messere, voi non vedreste tant'ossa se cane io fossi.*" The point of the reproach is difficult to render, depending as it does on the literal meaning of the name *Cane*.

"That he was one the Heavens forbid
To traffic in God's justice sold
By market-weight of earthly gold,
Or to bow down over the lid
Of steaming censers, and so be
Made clean of manhood's obloquy.

"That since no gate led, by God's will,
To Florence, but the one whereat
The priests and money-changers sat,
He still would wander ; for that still,
Even through the body's prison-bars,
His soul possessed the sun and stars."

Such were his words. It is indeed
For ever well our singers should
Utter good words and know them good
Not through song only ; with close heed
Lest, having spent for the work's sake
Six days, the man be left to make.

Months o'er Verona, till the feast
Was come for Florence the Free Town :
And at the shrine of Baptist John
The exiles, girt with many a priest
And carrying candles as they went,
Were held to mercy of the saint.

On the high seats in sober state,—
Gold neck-chains range o'er range below
Gold screen-work where the lilies grow,—
The Heads of the Republic sate,
Marking the humbled face go by
Each one of his house-enemy.

And as each proscrip't rose and stood
From kneeling in the ashen dust
On the shrine-steps, some magnate thrust
A beard into the velvet hood
Of his front colleague's gown, to see
The cinders stuck in the bare knee.

Tosinghi passed, Manelli passed,
Rinucci passed, each in his place ;
But not an Alighieri's face
Went by that day from first to last
In the Republic's triumph ; nor
A foot came home to Dante's door.

(RESPUBLICA—a public thing :
A shameful shameless prostitute,
Whose lust with one lord may not suit,
So takes by turn its revelling
A night with each, till each at morn
Is stripped and beaten forth forlorn,

And leaves her, cursing her. If she,
Indeed, have not some spice-draught, hid
In scent under a silver lid,
To drench his open throat with—he
Once hard asleep ; and thrust him not
At dawn beneath the stairs to rot.

Such *this* Republic!—not the Maid
 He yearned for; she who yet should stand
 With Heaven's accepted hand in hand,
 Invulnerable and unbetray'd :
 To whom, even as to God, should be
 Obeisance one with Liberty.)

Years filled out their twelve moons, and ceased
 One in another; and alway
 There were the whole twelve hours each day
 And each night as the years increased;
 And rising moon and setting sun
 Beheld that Dante's work was done.

What of his work for Florence? Well
 It was, he knew, and well must be.
 Yet evermore her hate's decree
 Dwelt in his thought intolerable:—
 His body to be burned,*—his soul
 To beat its wings at hope's vain goal.

What of his work for Beatrice?
 Now well-nigh was the third song writ,—
 The stars a third time sealing it
 With sudden music of pure peace:
 For echoing thrice the threefold song,
 The unnumbered stars the tone prolong.†

Each hour, as then the Vision pass'd,
 He heard the utter harmony
 Of the nine trembling spheres, till she
 Bowed her eyes towards him in the last,
 So that all ended with her eyes,
 Hell, Purgatory, Paradise.

"It is my trust, as the years fall,
 To write more worthily of her
 Who now, being made God's minister,
 Looks on His visage and knows all."
 Such was the hope that love dar'd blend
 With grief's slow fires, to make an end

Of the "New Life," his youth's dear book:
 Adding thereunto: "In such trust
 I labour, and believe I must
 Accomplish this which my soul took
 In charge, if God, my Lord and hers,
 Leave my life with me a few years."

The trust which he had borne in youth
 Was all at length accomplished. He
 At length had written worthily—
 Yea even of her; no rhymes uncouth
 'Twixt tongue and tongue; but by God's aid
 The first words Italy had said.

* Such was the last sentence passed by Florence against Dante, as a recalcitrant exile.

† E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.—INFERNO.
 Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.—PURGATORIO.
 L'amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle.—PARADISO.

Ah! haply now the heavenly guide
 Was not the last form seen by him:
 But there that Beatrice stood slim
 And bowed in passing at his side,
 For whom in youth his heart made moan
 Then when the city sat alone.*

Clearly herself: the same whom he
 Met, not past girlhood, in the street,
 Low-bosomed and with hidden feet;
 And then as woman perfectly,
 In years that followed, many an once,—
 And now at last among the suns

In that high vision. But indeed
 It may be memory might recall
 Last to him then the first of all,—
 The child his boyhood bore in heed
 Nine years. At length the voice brought peace,—
 "Even I, even I am Beatrice."

All this, being there, we had not seen.
 Seen only was the shadow wrought
 On the strong features bound in thought;
 The vagueness gaining gait and mien;
 The white streaks gathering clear to view
 In the burnt beard the women knew.

For a tale tells that on his track,
 As through Verona's streets he went,
 This saying certain women sent:—
 "Lo, he that strolls to Hell and back
 At will! Behold him, how Hell's reek
 Has crisped his beard and singed his cheek."

"Whereat" (Boccaccio's words) "he smiled
 For pride in fame." It might be so:
 Nevertheless we cannot know
 If haply he were not beguiled
 To bitterer mirth, who scarce could tell
 If he indeed were back from Hell.

So the day came, after a space,
 When Dante felt assured that there
 The sunshine must lie sicklier
 Even than in any other place,
 Save only Florence. When that day
 Had come, he rose and went his way.

He went and turned not. From his shoes
 It may be that he shook the dust,
 As every righteous dealer must
 Once and again ere life can close:
 And unaccomplished destiny
 Struck cold his forehead, it may be.

* *Quomodo sedet sola civitas!*—The words quoted by Dante in the *Vita Nuova* when he speaks of the death of Beatrice.

No book keeps record how the Prince
Sunned himself out of Dante's reach,
Nor how the Jester stank in speech :
While courtiers, used to cringe and wince,
Poets and harlots, all the throng,
Let loose their scandal and their song.

No book keeps record if the seat
Which Dante held at his host's board
Were sat in next by clerk or lord,—
If leman lolled with dainty feet
At ease, or hostage brooded there,
Or priest lacked silence for his prayer.

Eat and wash hands, Can Grande ;—scarce
We know their deeds now : hands which fed
Our Dante with that bitter bread ;
And thou the watch-dog of those stairs
Which, of all paths his feet knew well,
Were steeper found than Heaven or Hell.

THE BRIDE'S PRELUDE

"SISTER," said busy Amelotte
To listless Aloÿse ;
" Along your wedding-road the wheat
Bends as to hear your horse's feet,
And the noonday stands still for heat."

Amelotte laughed into the air
With eyes that sought the sun :
But where the walls in long brocade
Were screened, as one who is afraid
Sat Aloÿse within the shade.

And even in shade was gleam enough
To shut out full repose
From the bride's 'tiring-chamber, which
Was like the inner altar-niche
Whose dimness worship has made rich.

Within the window's heaped recess
The light was counterchanged
In blent reflexes manifold
From perfume-caskets of wrought gold
And gems the bride's hair could not hold,

All thrust together : and with these
A slim-curved lute, which now,
At Amelotte's sudden passing there,
Was swept in somehow unaware,
And shook to music the close air.

Against the haloed lattice-panes
The bridesmaid sunned her breast ;
Then to the glass turned tall and free,
And braced and shifted daintily
Her loin-belt through her côte-hardie.

The belt was silver, and the clasp
Of lozenged arm-bearings ;
A world of mirrored tints minute
The rippling sunshine wrought into 't,
That flushed her hand and warmed her foot.

At least an hour had Aloÿse—
Her jewels in her hair—
Her white gown, as became a bride,
Quartered in silver at each side—
Sat thus aloof, as if to hide.

Over her bosom, that lay still,
 The vest was rich in grain,
 With close pearls wholly overset :
 Around her throat the fastenings met
 Of chevesayle and mantelet.

Her arms were laid along her lap
 With the hands open : life
 Itself did seem at fault in her :
 Beneath the drooping brows, the stir
 Of thought made noonday heavier.

Long sat she silent ; and then raised
 Her head, with such a gasp
 As while she summoned breath to speak
 Fanned high that furnace in the cheek
 But sucked the heart-pulse cold and weak.

(Oh gather round her now, all ye
 Past seasons of her fear,—
 Sick springs, and summers deadly cold !
 To flight your hovering wings unfold,
 For now your secret shall be told.

Ye many sunlights, barbed with darts
 Of dread detecting flame,—
 Gaunt moonlights that like sentinels
 Went past with iron clank of bells,—
 Draw round and render up your spells !)

“ Sister,” said Aloyse, “ I had
 A thing to tell thee of
 Long since, and could not. But do thou
 Kneel first in prayer awhile, and bow
 Thine heart, and I will tell thee now.”

Amelotte wondered with her eyes ;
 But her heart said in her :
 “ Dear Aloyse would have me pray
 Because the awe she feels to-day
 Must need more prayers than she can say.”

So Amelotte put by the folds
 That covered up her feet,
 And knelt,—beyond the arras'd gloom
 And the hot window's dull perfume,—
 Where day was stillest in the room.

“ Queen Mary, hear,” she said, “ and say
 To Jesus the Lord Christ,
 This bride's new joy, which He confers,
 New joy to many ministers,
 And many griefs are bound in hers.”

The bride turned in her chair, and hid
 Her face against the back,
 And took her pearl-girt elbows in
 Her hands, and could not yet begin,
 But shuddering, uttered, “ Urscelyn ! ”

Most weak she was ; for as she pressed
Her hand against her throat,
Along the arras she let trail
Her face, as if all heart did fail,
And sat with shut eyes, dumb and pale.

Amelotte still was on her knees
As she had kneeled to pray.
Deeming her sister swooned, she thought,
At first, some succour to have brought ;
But Aloÿse rocked, as one distraught.

She would have pushed the lattice wide
To gain what breeze might be ;
But marking that no leaf once beat
The outside casement, it seemed meet
Not to bring in more scent and heat.

So she said only : " Aloÿse,
Sister, when happened it
At any time that the bride came
To ill, or spoke in fear of shame,
When speaking first the bridegroom's name ? "

A bird had out its song and ceased
Ere the bride spoke. At length
She said : " The name is as the thing :—
Sin hath no second christening,
And shame is all that shame can bring.

" In divers places many an while
I would have told thee this ;
But faintness took me, or a fit
Like fever. God would not permit
That I should change thine eyes with it.

" Yet once I spoke, hadst thou but heard :—
That time we wandered out
All the sun's hours, but missed our way
When evening darkened, and so lay
The whole night covered up in hay.

" At last my face was hidden : so,
Having God's hint, I paused
Not long ; but drew myself more near
Where thou wast laid, and shook off fear,
And whispered quick into thine ear

" Something of the whole tale. At first
I lay and bit my hair
For the sore silence thou didst keep :
Till, as thy breath came long and deep,
I knew that thou hadst been asleep.

" The moon was covered, but the stars
Lasted till morning broke.
Awake, thou told'st me that thy dream
Had been of me,—that all did seem
At jar,—but that it was a dream.

"I knew God's hand and might not speak,
 After that night I kept
 Silence and let the record swell :
 Till now there is much more to tell
 Which must be told out ill or well."

She paused then, weary, with dry lips
 Apart. From the outside
 By fits there boomed a dull report
 From where i' the hanging tennis-court
 The bridegroom's retinue made sport.

The room lay still in dusty glare,
 Having no sound through it
 Except the chirp of a caged bird
 That came and ceased : and if she stirred,
 Amelotte's raiment could be heard.

Quoth Amelotte : "The night this chanced
 Was a late summer night
 Last year ! What secret, for Christ's love,
 Keep'st thou since then ? Mary above !
 What thing is this thou speakest of ?

"Mary and Christ ! Lest when 'tis told
 I should be prone to wrath,—
 This prayer beforehand ! How she errs
 Soe'er, take count of grief like hers,
 Whereof the days are turned to years !"

She bowed her neck, and having said,
 Kept on her knees to hear ;
 And then, because strained thought demands
 Quiet before it understands,
 Darkened her eyesight with her hands.

So when at last her sister spoke,
 She did not see the pain
 O' the mouth nor the ashamed eyes,
 But marked the breath that came in sighs
 And the half-pausing for replies.

This was the bride's sad prelude-strain :—
 "I' the convent where a girl
 I dwelt till near my womanhood,
 I had but preachings of the rood
 And Aves told in solitude

"To spend my heart on : and my hand
 Had but the weary skill
 To eke out upon silken cloth
 Christ's visage, or the long bright growth
 Of Mary's hair, or Satan wroth.

"So when at last I went, and thou,
 A child not known before,
 Didst come to take the place I left,—
 My limbs, after such lifelong theft
 Of life, could be but little deft

" In all that ministers delight
To noble women : I
Had learned no word of youth's discourse,
Nor gazed on games of warriors,
Nor trained a hound, nor ruled a horse.

" Besides, the daily life i' the sun
Made me at first hold back.
To thee this came at once ; to me
It crept with pauses timidly ;
I am not blithe and strong like thee.

" Yet my feet liked the dances well,
The songs went to my voice,
The music made me shake and weep ;
And often, all night long, my sleep
Gave dreams I had been fain to keep.

" But though I loved not holy things,
To hear them scorned brought pain,—
They were my childhood ; and these dames
Were merely perjured in saints' names
And fixed upon saints' days for games.

" And sometimes when my father rode
To hunt with his loud friends,
I dared not bring him to be quaff'd,
As my wont was, his stirrup-draught,
Because they jested so and laughed.

" At last one day my brothers said,
' The girl must not grow thus,—
Bring her a jennet,—she shall ride.'
They helped my mounting, and I tried
To laugh with them and keep their side,

" But brakes were rough and bents were steep
Upon our path that day :
My palfrey threw me ; and I went
Upon men's shoulders home, sore spent,
While the chase followed up the scent.

" Our shrift-father (and he alone
Of all the household there
Had skill in leechcraft) was away
When I reached home. I tossed, and lay
Sullen with anguish the whole day.

" For the day passed ere some one brought
To mind that in the hunt
Rode a young lord she named, long bred
Among the priests, whose art (she said)
Might chance to stand me in much stead.

" I bade them seek and summon him :
But long ere this, the chase
Had scattered, and he was not found.
I lay in the same weary stound,
Therefore, until the night came round.

PRINCIPAL POEMS

"It was dead night and near on twelve
 When the horse-tramp at length
 Beat up the echoes of the court :
 By then, my feverish breath was short
 With pain the sense could scarce support.

"My fond nurse sitting near my feet
 Rose softly,—her lamp's flame
 Held in her hand, lest it should make
 My heated lids, in passing, ache ;
 And she passed softly, for my sake.

"Returning soon, she brought the youth
 They spoke of. Meek he seemed,
 But good knights held him of stout heart.
 He was akin to us in part,
 And bore our shield, but barred athwart.

"I now remembered to have seen
 His face, and heard him praised
 For letter-lore and medicine,
 Seeing his youth was nurtured in
 Priests' knowledge, as mine own had been."

The bride's voice did not weaken here,
 Yet by her sudden pause
 She seemed to look for questioning ;
 Or else (small need though) 'twas to bring
 Well to her mind the bygone thing.

Her thought, long stagnant, stirred by speech,
 Gave her a sick recoil ;
 As, dip thy fingers through the green
 That masks a pool,—where they have been
 The naked depth is black between.

Amelotte kept her knees ; her face
 Was shut within her hands,
 As it had been throughout the tale ;
 Her forehead's whiteness might avail
 Nothing to say if she were pale.

Although the lattice had dropped loose,
 There was no wind ; the heat
 Being so at rest that Amelotte
 Heard far beneath the plunge and float
 Of a hound swimming in the moat.

Some minutes since, two rooks had toiled
 Home to the nests that crowned
 Ancestral ash-trees. Through the glare
 Beating again, they seemed to tear
 With that thick caw the woof o' the air.

But else, 'twas at the dead of noon
 Absolute silence ; all,
 From the raised bridge and guarded sconce
 To green-clad places of pleasure
 Where the long lake was white with swans.

Amelotte spoke not any word
Nor moved she once ; but felt
Between her hands in narrow space
Her own hot breath upon her face,
And kept in silence the same place.

Aloÿse did not hear at all
The sounds without. She heard
The inward voice (past help obey'd)
Which might not slacken nor be stay'd,
But urged her till the whole were said.

Therefore she spoke again : " That night
But little could be done :
My foot, held in my nurse's hands,
He swathed up heedfully in bands,
And for my rest gave close commands.

" I slept till noon, but an ill sleep
Of dreams : through all that day
My side was stiff and caught the breath ;
Next day, such pain as sickeneth
Took me, and I was nigh to death.

" Life strove, Death claimed me for his own
Through days and nights : but now
'Twas the good father tended me,
Having returned. Still, I did see
The youth I spoke of constantly.

" For he would with my brothers come
To stay beside my couch,
And fix my eyes against his own,
Noting my pulse ; or else alone,
To sit at gaze while I made moan.

" (Some nights I knew he kept the watch,
Because my women laid
The rushes thick for his steel shoes.)
Through many days this pain did use
The life God would not let me lose.

" At length, with my good nurse to aid,
I could walk forth again :
And still, as one who broods or grieves,
At noons I'd meet him and at eves,
With idle feet that drove the leaves.

" The day when I first walked alone
Was thinned in grass and leaf,
And yet a goodly day o' the year :
The last bird's cry upon mine ear
Left my brain weak, it was so clear.

" The tears were sharp within mine eyes.
I sat down, being glad,
And wept ; but stayed the sudden flow
Anon, for footsteps that fell slow ;
'Twas that youth passed me, bowing low.

"He passed me without speech; but when,
 At least an hour gone by,
 Rethreading the same covert, he
 Saw I was still beneath the tree,
 He spoke and sat him down with me.

"Little we said; nor one heart heard
 Even what was said within;
 And, faltering some farewell, I soon
 Rose up; but then i' the autumn noon
 My feeble brain whirled like a swoon.

"He made me sit. 'Cousin, I grieve
 Your sickness stays by you.'
 'I would,' said I, 'that you did err
 So grieving. I am wearier
 Than death, of the sickening dying year.'

"He answered: 'If your weariness
 Accepts a remedy,
 I hold one and can give it you.'
 I gazed: 'What ministers thereto,
 Be sure,' I said, 'that I will do.'

"He went on quickly:—'Twas a cure
 He had not ever named
 Unto our kin lest they should stint
 Their favour, for some foolish hint
 Of wizardry or magic in't:

"But that if he were let to come
 Within my bower that night,
 (My women still attending me,
 He said, while he remain'd there,) he
 Could teach me the cure privily.

"I bade him come that night. He came;
 But little in his speech
 Was cure or sickness spoken of,
 Only a passionate fierce love
 That clamoured upon God above.

"My women wondered, leaning close
 Aloof. At mine own heart
 I think great wonder was not stirr'd.
 I dared not listen, yet I heard
 His tangled speech, word within word.

"He craved my pardon first,—all else
 Wild tumult. In the end
 He remained silent at my feet
 Fumbling the rushes. Strange quick heat
 Made all the blood of my life meet.

"And lo! I loved him. I but said,
 If he would leave me then,
 His hope some future might forecast.
 His hot lips stung my hand: at last
 My damsels led him forth in haste."

The bride took breath to pause ; and turned
Her gaze where Amelotte
Knelt,—the gold hair upon her back
Quite still in all its threads,—the track
Of her still shadow sharp and black.

That listening without sight had grown
To stealthy dread ; and now
That the one sound she had to mark
Left her alone too, she was stark
Afraid, as children in the dark.

Her fingers felt her temples beat ;
Then came that brain-sickness
Which thinks to scream, and murmureth ;
And pent between her hands, the breath
Was damp against her face like death.

Her arms both fell at once ; but when
She gasped upon the light,
Her sense returned. She would have pray'd
To change whatever words still stay'd
Behind, but felt there was no aid.

So she rose up, and having gone
Within the window's arch
Once more, she sat there, all intent
On torturing doubts, and once more bent
To hear, in mute bewilderment.

But Aloyse still paused. Thereon
Amelotte gathered voice
In somehow from the torpid fear
Coiled round her spirit. Low but clear
She said : " Speak, sister ; for I hear."

But Aloyse threw up her neck
And called the name of God :—
" Judge, God, 'twixt her and me to-day !
She knows how hard this is to say,
Yet will not have one word away."

Her sister was quite silent. Then
Afresh :—" Not she, dear Lord !
Thou be my judge, on Thee I call !"
She ceased,—her forehead smote the wall :
" Is there a God," she said " at all " ?

Amelotte shuddered at the soul,
But did not speak. The pause
Was long this time. At length the bride
Pressed her hand hard against her side,
And trembling between shame and pride

Said by fierce effort : " From that night
Often at nights we met :
That night, his passion could but rave :
The next, what grace his lips did crave
I knew not, but I know I gave."

Where Amelotte was sitting, all
 The light and warmth of day
 Were so upon her without shade
 That the thing seemed by sunshine made
 Most foul and wanton to be said.

She would have questioned more, and known
 The whole truth at its worst,
 But held her silent, in mere shame
 Of day. 'Twas only these words came :—
 "Sister, thou hast not said his name."

"Sister," quoth Aloyse, "thou know'st
 His name. I said that he
 Was in a manner of our kin.
 Waiting the title he might win,
 They called him the Lord Urscelyn."

The bridegroom's name, to Amelotte
 Daily familiar,—heard
 Thus in this dreadful history,—
 Was dreadful to her; as might be
 Thine own voice speaking unto thee.

The day's mid-hour was almost full;
 Upon the dial-plate
 The angel's sword stood near at One.
 An hour's remaining yet; the sun
 Will not decrease till all be done.

Through the bride's lattice there crept in
 At whiles (from where the train
 Of minstrels, till the marriage-call,
 Loitered at windows of the wall,)
 Stray lute-notes, sweet and musical.

They clung in the green growths and moss
 Against the outside stone;
 Low like dirge-wail or requiem
 They murmured, lost 'twixt leaf and stem:
 There was no wind to carry them.

Amelotte gathered herself back
 Into the wide recess
 That the sun flooded: it o'erspread
 Like flame the hair upon her head
 And fringed her face with burning red.

All things seemed shaken and at change:
 A silent place o' the hills
 She knew, into her spirit came:
 Within herself she said its name
 And wondered was it still the same.

The bride (whom silence goaded) now
 Said strongly,—her despair
 By stubborn will kept underneath:—
 "Sister, 'twere well thou didst not breathe
 That curse of thine. Give me my wreath."

"Sister," said Amelotte, "abide
In peace. Be God thy judge,
As thou hast said—not I. For me,
I merely will thank God that he
Whom thou hast lovèd loveth thee."

Then Aloyse lay back, and laughed
With wan lips bitterly,
Saying, "Nay, thank thou God for this,—
That never any soul like his
Shall have its portion where love is."

Weary of wonder, Amelotte
Sat silent: she would ask
No more, though all was unexplained:
She was too weak; the ache still pained
Her eyes,—her forehead's pulse remained.

The silence lengthened. Aloyse
Was fain to turn her face
Apart, to where the arras told
Two Testaments, the New and Old,
In shapes and meanings manifold.

One solace that was gained, she hid.
Her sister, from whose curse
Her heart recoiled, had blessed instead:
Yet would not her pride have it said
How much the blessing comforted.

Only, on looking round again
After some while, the face
Which from the arras turned away
Was more at peace and less at bay
With shame than it had been that day.

She spoke right on, as if no pause
Had come between her speech:
"That year from warmth grew bleak and pass'd,"
She said; "the days from first to last
How slow,—woe's me! the nights how fast!

"From first to last it was not known:
My nurse, and of my train
Some four or five, alone could tell
What terror kept inscrutable:
There was good need to guard it well.

"Not the guilt only made the shame,
But he was without land
And born amiss. He had but come
To train his youth here at our home,
And, being man, depart therefrom.

'Of the whole time each single day
Brought fear and great unrest:
It seemed that all would not avail
Some once,—that my close watch would fail,
And some sign, somehow, tell the tale.

"The noble maidens that I knew,
 My fellows, oftentimes
 Midway in talk or sport, would look
 A wonder which my fears mistook,
 To see how I turned faint and shook.

"They had a game of cards, where each
 By painted arms might find
 What knight she should be given to.
 Ever with trembling hand I threw
 Lest I should learn the thing I knew.

"And once it came. And Aure d'Honvaux
 Held up the bended shield
 And laughed: 'Gramercy for our share!—
 If to our bridal we but fare
 To smutch the blazon that we bear!'

"But proud Denise de Villenbois
 Kissed me, and gave her wench
 The card, and said: 'If in these bowers
 You women play at paramours,
 You must not mix your game with ours.'

"And one upcast it from her hand:
 'Lo! see how high he'll soar!'
 But then their laugh was bitterest;
 For the wind veered at fate's behest
 And blew it back into my breast.

"Oh! if I met him in the day
 Or heard his voice,—at meals
 Or at the Mass or through the hall,—
 A look turned towards me' would appal
 My heart by seeming to know all.

"Yet I grew curious of my shame,
 And sometimes in the church,
 On hearing such a sin rebuked,
 Have held my girdle-glass unhooked
 To see how such a woman looked.

"But if at night he did not come,
 I lay all deadly cold
 To think they might have smitten sore
 And slain him, and as the night wore,
 His corpse be lying at my door.

"And entering or going forth,
 Our proud shield o'er the gate
 Seemed to arraign my shrinking eyes.
 With tremors and unspoken lies
 The year went past me in this wise.

"About the spring of the next year
 An ailing fell on me;
 (I had been stronger till the spring;)
 'Twas mine old sickness gathering,
 I thought; but 'twas another thing.

"I had such yearnings as brought tears,
And a wan dizziness :
Motion, like feeling, grew intense ;
Sight was a haunting evidence
And sound a pang that snatched the sense.

"It now was hard on that great ill
Which lost our wealth from us
And all our lands. Accursed be
The peevish fools of liberty
Who will not let themselves be free !

"The Prince was fled into the west :
A price was on his blood,
But he was safe. To us his friends
He left that ruin which attends
The strife against God's secret ends.

"The league dropped all asunder,—lord,
Gentle and serf. Our house
Was marked to fall. And a day came
When half the wealth that propped our name
Went from us in a wind of flame.

"Six hours I lay upon the wall
And saw it burn. But when
It clogged the day in a black bed
Of louring vapour, I was led
Down to the postern, and we fled.

"But ere we fled, there was a voice
Which I heard speak, and say
That many of our friends, to shun
Our fate, had left us and were gone,
And that Lord Ursceelyn was one.

"That name, as was its wont, made sight
And hearing whirl. I gave
No heed but only to the name :
I held my senses, dreading them,
And was at strife to look the same.

"We rode and rode. As the speed grew,
The growth of some vague curse
Swarmed in my brain. It seemed to me
Numbed by the swiftmess, but would be—
That still—clear knowledge certainly.

"Night lapsed. At dawn the sea was there
And the sea-wind : afar
The ravening surge was hoarse and loud,
And underneath the dim dawn-cloud
Each stalking wave shook like a shroud.

"From my drawn litter I looked out
Unto the swarthy sea,
And knew. That voice, which late had cross'd
Mine ears, seemed with the foam uptoss'd :
I knew that Ursceelyn was lost.

"Then I spake all: I turned on one
And on the other, and spake:
My curse laughed in me to behold
Their eyes: I sat up, stricken cold,
Mad of my voice till all was told.

"Oh! of my brothers, Hugues was mute,
And Gilles was wild and loud,
And Raoul strained abroad his face,
As if his gnashing wrath could trace
Even there the prey that it must chase.

"And round me murmured all our train,
Hoarse as the hoarse-tongued sea;
Till Hugues from silence louring woke,
And cried: 'What ails the foolish folk?
Know ye not frenzy's lightning-stroke?'

"But my stern father came to them
And quelled them with his look,
Silent and deadly pale. Anon
I knew that we were hastening on,
My litter closed and the light gone.

"And I remember all that day
The barren bitter wind
Without, and the sea's moaning there
That I first moaned with unaware,
And when I knew, shook down my hair.

"Few followed us or faced our flight:
Once only I could hear,
Far in the front, loud scornful words,
And cries I knew of hostile lords,
And crash of spears and grind of swords.

"It was soon ended. On that day
Before the light had changed
We reached our refuge; miles of rock
Bulwarked for war; whose strength might mock
Sky, sea, or man, to storm or shock.

"Listless and feebly conscious, I
Lay far within the night
Awake. The many pains incurred
That day,—the whole, said, seen or heard,—
Stayed by in me as things deferred.

"Not long. At dawn I slept. In dreams
All was passed through afresh
From end to end. As the morn heaved
Towards noon, I, waking sore aggrieved,
That I might die, cursed God, and lived.

"Many days went, and I saw none
Except my women. They
Calmed their wan faces, loving me;
And when they wept, lest I should see,
Would chaunt a desolate melody.

"Panic unthreatened shook my blood
Each sunset, all the slow
Subsiding of the turbid light.
I would rise, sister, as I might,
And bathe my forehead through the night

"To elude madness. The stark walls
Made chill the mirk: and when
We ope'd our curtains, to resume
Sun-sickness after long sick gloom,
The withering sea-wind walked the room.

"Through the gaunt windows the great gales
Bore in the tattered clumps
Of waif-weed and the tamarisk-boughs;
And sea-mews, 'mid the storm's carouse,
Were flung, wild-clamouring, in the house.

"My hounds I had not; and my hawk,
Which they had saved for me,
Wanting the sun and rain to beat
His wings, soon lay with gathered feet;
And my flowers faded, lacking heat.

"Such still were griefs: for grief was still
A separate sense, untouched
Of that despair which had become
My life. Great anguish could benumb
My soul,—my heart was quarrelsome.

"Time crept. Upon a day at length
My kinsfolk sat with me:
That which they asked was bare and plain:
I answered: the whole bitter strain
Was again said, and heard again.

"Fierce Raoul snatched his sword, and turned
The point against my breast.
I bared it, smiling: 'To the heart
Strike home,' I said; 'another dart
Wreaks hourly there a deadlier smart.'

"'Twas then my sire struck down the sword,
And said with shaken lips:
'She from whom all of you receive
Your life, so smiled; and I forgive.'
Thus, for my mother's sake, I live.

"But I, a mother even as she,
Turned shuddering to the wall:
For I said: 'Great God! and what would I do,
When to the sword, with the thing I knew,
I offered not one life but two!'

"Then I fell back from them, and lay
Outwearied. My tired sense
Soon filmed and settled, and like stone
I slept; till something made me moan,
And I woke up at night alone.

"I woke at midnight, cold and dazed;
 Because I found myself
 Seated upright, with bosom bare,
 Upon my bed, combing my hair,
 Ready to go, I knew not where.

"It dawned light day,—the last of those
 Long months of longing days.
 That noon, the change was wrought on me
 In somewise,—nought to hear or see,—
 Only a trance and agony."

The bride's voice failed her, from no will
 To pause. The bridesmaid leaned,
 And where the window-panes were white,
 Looked for the day: she knew not quite
 If there were either day or night.

It seemed to Aloÿse that the whole
 Day's weight lay back on her
 Like lead. The hours that did remain
 Beat their dry wings upon her brain
 Once in mid-flight, and passed again.

There hung a cage of burnt perfumes
 In the recess: but these,
 For some hours, weak against the sun,
 Had simmered in white ash. From One
 The second quarter was begun.

They had not heard the stroke. The air,
 Though altered with no wind,
 Breathed now by pauses, so to say:
 Each breath was time that went away,—
 Each pause a minute of the day.

I' the almonry, the almoner,
 Hard by, had just dispensed
 Church-dole and march-dole. High and wide
 Now rose the shout of thanks, which cried
 On God that He should bless the bride.

Its echo thrilled within their feet,
 And in the furthest rooms
 Was heard, where maidens flushed and gay
 Wove with stooped necks the wreaths away
 Fair for the virgin's marriage-day.

The mother leaned along, in thought
 After her child; till tears,
 Bitter, not like a wedded girl's,
 Fell down her breast along her curls,
 And ran in the close work of pearls.

The speech ached at her heart. She said:
 "Sweet Mary, do thou plead
 This hour with thy most blessed Son
 To let these shameful words atone,
 That I may die when I have done."

The thought ached at her soul. Yet now :—

“Itself—that life” (she said,)
“Out of my weary life—when sense
Unclosed, was gone. What evil men’s
Most evil hands had borne it thence

“I knew, and cursed them. Still in sleep
I have my child; and pray
To know if it indeed appear
As in my dream’s perpetual sphere,
That I—death reached—may seek it there.

“Sleeping, I wept; though until dark
A fever dried mine eyes
Kept open; save when a tear might
Be forced from the mere ache of sight.
And I nursed hatred day and night.

“Aye, and I sought revenge by spells;
And vainly many a time
Have laid my face into the lap
Of a wise woman, and heard clap
Her thunder, the fiend’s juggling trap.

“At length I feared to curse them, lest
From evil lips the curse
Should be a blessing; and would sit
Rocking myself and stifling it
With babbled jargon of no wit.

“But this was not at first: the days
And weeks made frenzied months
Before this came. My curses, pil’d
Then with each hour unreconcil’d,
Still wait for those who took my child.”

She stopped, grown fainter. “Amelotte,
Surely,” she said, “this sun
Sheds judgment-fire from the fierce south:
It does not let me breathe: the drouth
Is like sand spread within my mouth.”

The bridesmaid rose. I’ the outer glare
Gleamed her pale cheeks, and eyes
Sore troubled; and aweary weigh’d
Her brows just lifted out of shade;
And the light jarred within her head.

’Mid flowers fair-heaped there stood a bowl
With water. She therein
Through eddying bubbles slid a cup,
And offered it, being risen up,
Close to her sister’s mouth, to sup.

The freshness dwelt upon her sense,
Yet did not the bride drink;
But she dipped in her hand anon
And cooled her temples; and all wan
With lids that held their ache, went on.

"Through those dark watches of my woe,
 Time, an ill plant, had waxed
 Apace. That year was finished. Dumb
 And blind, life's wheel with earth's had come
 Whirled round : and we might seek our home.

"Our wealth was rendered back, with wealth
 Snatched from our foes. The house
 Had more than its old strength and fame :
 But still 'neath the fair outward claim
 I rankled,—a fierce core of shame.

"It chilled me from their eyes and lips
 Upon a night of those
 First days of triumph, as I gazed
 Listless and sick, or scarcely raised
 My face to mark the sports they praised.

"The endless changes of the dance
 Bewildered me : the tones
 Of lute and cithern struggled tow'rd
 Some sense ; and still in the last chords
 The music seemed to sing wild words.

"My shame possessed me in the light
 And pageant, till I swooned.
 But from that hour I put my shame
 From me, and cast it over them
 By God's command and in God's name

"For my child's bitter sake. O thou
 Once felt against my heart
 With longing of the eyes,—a pain
 Since to my heart for ever,—then
 Beheld not, and not felt again !"

She scarcely paused, continuing :—
 "That year drooped weak in March ;
 And April, finding the streams dry,
 Choked, with no rain, in dust : the sky
 Shall not be fainter this July.

"Men sickened ; beasts lay without strength ;
 The year died in the land.
 But I, already desolate,
 Said merely, sitting down to wait,—
 'The seasons change and Time wears late.'

"For I had my hard secret told,
 In secret, to a priest ;
 With him I communed ; and he said
 The world's soul, for its sins, was sped,
 And the sun's courses numberèd.

"The year slid like a corpse afloat :
 None trafficked,—who had bread
 Did eat. That year our legions, come
 Thinned from the place of war, at home
 Found busier death, more burdensome.

" Tidings and rumours came with them,
The first for months. The chiefs
Sat daily at our board, and in
Their speech were names of friend and kin :
One day they spoke of Urscllyn.

" The words were light, among the rest :
Quick glance my brothers sent
To sift the speech ; and I, struck through,
Sat sick and giddy in full view :
Yet did none gaze, so many knew.

" Because in the beginning, much
Had caught abroad, through them
That heard my clamour on the coast :
But two were hanged ; and then the most
Held silence wisdom, as thou know'st.

" That year the convent yielded thee
Back to our home ; and thou
Then knew'st not how I shuddered cold
To kiss thee, seeming to enfold
To my changed heart myself of old.

" Then there was showing thee the house,
So many rooms and doors ;
Thinking the while how thou wouldst start
If once I flung the doors apart
Of one dull chamber in my heart.

" And yet I longed to open it ;
And often in that year
Of plague and want, when side by side
We've knelt to pray with them that died,
My prayer was, ' Show her what I hide ! ' "

END OF PART I

JENNY

Vengeance of Jenny's case ! Fie on her ! Never name her, child !—(Mrs. Quickly.)

LAZY laughing languid Jenny,
Fond of a kiss and fond of a guinea,
Whose head upon my knee to-night
Rests for a while, as if grown light
With all our dances and the sound
To which the wild tunes spun you round :
Fair Jenny mine, the thoughtless queen
Of kisses which the blush between
Could hardly make much daintier ;
Whose eyes are as blue skies, whose hair
Is countless gold incomparable :
Fresh flower, scarce touched with signs that tell
Of Love's exuberant hotbed :—Nay,
Poor flower left torn since yesterday
Until to-morrow leave you bare ;
Poor handful of bright spring-water
Flung in the whirlpool's shrieking face ;
Poor shameful Jenny, full of grace
Thus with your head upon my knee ;—
Whose person or whose purse may be
The lodestar of your reverie ?

This room of yours, my Jenny, looks
A change from mine so full of books,
Whose serried ranks hold fast, forsooth,
So many captive hours of youth,—
The hours they thief from day and night
To make one's cherished work come right,
And leave it wrong for all their theft,
Even as to-night my work was left :
Until I vowed that since my brain
And eyes of dancing seemed so fain,
My feet should have some dancing too :—
And thus it was I met with you.
Well, I suppose 'twas hard to part,
For here I am. And now, sweetheart,
You seem too tired to get to bed.

It was a careless life I led
When rooms like this were scarce so strange
Not long ago. What breeds the change,—
The many aims or the few years ?
Because to-night it all appears
Something I do not know again.

The cloud's not danced out of my brain —
 The cloud that made it turn and swim
 While hour by hour the books grew dim.
 Why, Jenny, as I watch you there,—
 For all your wealth of loosened hair,
 Your silk ungirdled and unlac'd
 And warm sweets open to the waist,
 All golden in the lamplight's gleam,—
 You know not what a book you seem,
 Half-read by lightning in a dream!
 How should you know, my Jenny? Nay,
 And I should be ashamed to say:—
 Poor beauty, so well worth a kiss!
 But while my thought runs on like this
 With wasteful whims more than enough,
 I wonder what you're thinking of.

If of myself you think at all,
 What is the thought?—conjectural
 On sorry matters best unsolved?—
 Or inly is each grace revolved
 To fit me with a lure?—or (sad
 To think!) perhaps you're merely glad
 That I'm not drunk or ruffianly
 And let you rest upon my knee.

For sometimes, were the truth confess'd,
 You're thankful for a little rest,—
 Glad from the crush to rest within,
 From the heart-sickness and the din
 Where envy's voice at virtue's pitch
 Mocks you because your gown is rich;
 And from the pale girl's dumb rebuke,
 Whose ill-clad grace and toil-worn look
 Proclaim the strength that keeps her weak,
 And other nights than yours bespeak;
 And from the wise unchildish elf,
 To schoolmate lesser than himself
 Pointing you out, what thing you are:—
 Yes, from the daily jeer and jar,
 From shame and shame's outbraving too,
 Is rest not sometimes sweet to you?—
 But most from the hatefulness of man,
 Who spares not to end what he began,
 Whose acts are ill and his speech ill,
 Who, having used you at his will,
 Thrusts you aside, as when I dine
 I serve the dishes and the wine.

Well, handsome Jenny mine, sit up:
 I've filled our glasses, let us sup,
 And do not let me think of you,
 Lest shame of yours suffice for two.
 What, still so tired? Well, well then, keep
 Your head there, so you do not sleep;
 But that the weariness may pass
 And leave you merry, take this glass.
 Ah! lazy lily hand, more bless'd
 If ne'er in rings it had been dress'd
 Nor ever by a glove conceal'd!

Behold the lilies of the field,
 They toil not neither do they spin ;
 (So doth the ancient text begin,—
 Not of such rest as one of these
 Can share.) Another rest and ease
 Along each summer-sated path
 From its new lord the garden hath,
 Than that whose spring in blessings ran
 Which praised the bounteous husbandman,
 Ere yet, in days of hankering breath,
 The lilies sickened unto death.

What, Jenny, are your lilies dead ?
 Aye, and the snow-white leaves are spread
 Like winter on the garden-bed.
 But you had roses left in May,—
 They were not gone too. Jenny, nay,
 But must your roses die, and those
 Their purpled buds that should unclose ?
 Even so ; the leaves are curled apart,
 Still red as from the broken heart,
 And here's the naked stem of thorns.

Nay, nay, mere words. Here nothing warns
 As yet of winter. Sickness here
 Or want alone could waken fear,—
 Nothing but passion wrings a tear.
 Except when there may rise unsought
 Haply at times a passing thought
 Of the old days which seem to be
 Much older than any history
 That is written in any book ;
 When she would lie in fields and look
 Along the ground through the blown grass
 And wonder where the city was,
 Far out of sight, whose broil and bale
 They told her then for a child's tale.

Jenny, you know the city now.
 A child can tell the tale there, how
 Some things which are not yet enroll'd
 In market-lists are bought and sold
 Even till the early Sunday light,
 When Saturday night is market-night
 Everywhere, be it dry or wet,
 And market-night in the Haymarket.
 Our learned London children know,
 Poor Jenny, all your pride and woe ;
 Have seen your lifted silken skirt
 Advertise dainties through the dirt ;
 Have seen your coach-wheels splash rebuke
 On virtue ; and have learned your look
 When, wealth and health slipped past, you stare
 Along the streets alone, and there,
 Round the long park, across the bridge,
 The cold lamps at the pavement's edge
 Wind on together and apart,
 A fiery serpent for your heart.

Let the thoughts pass, an empty cloud !
 Suppose I were to think aloud,—
 What if to her all this were said ?
 Why, as a volume seldom read
 Being opened halfway shuts again,
 So might the pages of her brain
 Be parted at such words, and thence
 Close back upon the dusty sense.
 For is there hue or shape defin'd
 In Jenny's desecrated mind,
 Where all contagious currents meet,
 A Lethe of the middle street ?
 Nay, it reflects not any face,
 Nor sound is in its sluggish pace,
 But as they coil those eddies clot,
 And night and day remember not.

Why, Jenny, you're asleep at last !—
 Asleep, poor Jenny, hard and fast,—
 So young and soft and tired ; so fair,
 With chin thus nestled in your hair,
 Mouth quiet, eyelids almost blue
 As if some sky of dreams shone through !

Just as another woman sleeps !
 Enough to throw one's thoughts in heaps
 Of doubt and horror,—what to say
 Or think,—this awful secret sway,
 The potter's power over the clay !
 Of the same lump (it has been said)
 For honour and dishonour made,
 Two sister vessels. Here is one.

My cousin Nell is fond of fun,
 And fond of dress, and change, and praise,
 So mere a woman in her ways :
 And if her sweet eyes rich in youth
 Are like her lips that tell the truth,
 My cousin Nell is fond of love.
 And she's the girl I'm proudest of.
 Who does not prize her, guard her well ?
 The love of change, in cousin Nell,
 Shall find the best and hold it dear :
 The unconquered mirth turn quieter
 Not through her own, through others' woe :
 The conscious pride of beauty glow
 Beside another's pride in her,
 One little part of all they share.
 For Love himself shall ripen these
 In a kind soil to just increase
 Through years of fertilizing peace.

Of the same lump (as it is said)
 For honour and dishonour made,
 Two sister vessels. Here is one.

It makes a goblin of the sun.

So pure,—so fall'n ! How dare to think
 Of the first common kindred link ?
 Yet, Jenny, till the world shall burn
 It seems that all things take their turn ;

And who shall say but this fair tree
 May need, in changes that may be,
 Your children's children's charity?
 Scorned then, no doubt, as you are scorn'd!
 Shall no man hold his pride forewarn'd
 Till in the end, the Day of Days,
 At Judgment, one of his own race,
 As frail and lost as you, shall rise,—
 His daughter, with his mother's eyes?

How Jenny's clock ticks on the shelf!
 Might not the dial scorn itself
 That has such hours to register?
 Yet as to me, even so to her
 Are golden sun and silver moon,
 In daily largesse of earth's boon,
 Counted for life-coins to one tune.
 And if, as blindfold fates are toss'd,
 Through some one man this life be lost,
 Shall soul not somehow pay for soul?

Fair shines the gilded aureole
 In which our highest painters place
 Some living woman's simple face.
 And the stilled features thus descried
 As Jenny's long throat droops aside,—
 The shadows where the cheeks are thin,
 And pure wide curve from ear to chin,—
 With Raffael's, Leonardo's hand
 To show them to men's souls, might stand,
 Whole ages long, the whole world through,
 For preachings of what God can do.
 What has man done here? How atone,
 Great God, for this which man has done?
 And for the body and soul which by
 Man's pitiless doom must now comply
 With lifelong hell, what lullaby
 Of sweet forgetful second birth
 Remains? All dark. No sign on earth
 What measure of God's rest endows
 The many mansions of his house.

If but a woman's heart might see
 Such erring heart unerringly
 For once! But that can never be.

Like a rose shut in a book
 In which pure women may not look,
 For its base pages claim control
 To crush the flower within the soul;
 Where through each dead rose-leaf that clings,
 Pale as transparent Psyche-wings,
 To the vile text, are traced such things
 As might make lady's cheek indeed
 More than a living rose to read;
 So nought save foolish foulness may
 Watch with hard eyes the sure decay;
 And so the life-blood of this rose,
 Puddled with shameful knowledge, flows
 Through leaves no chaste hand may uncloze:

Yet still it keeps such faded show
 Of when 'twas gathered long ago,
 That the crushed petals' lovely grain,
 The sweetness of the sanguine stain,
 Seen of a woman's eyes, must make
 Her pitiful heart, so prone to ache,
 Love roses better for its sake :—
 Only that this can never be :—
 Even so unto her sex is she.

Yet, Jenny, looking long at you,
 The woman almost fades from view.
 A cipher of man's changeless sum
 Of lust, past, present, and to come,
 Is left. A riddle that one shrinks
 To challenge from the scornful sphinx.

Like a toad within a stone
 Seated while Time crumbles on ;
 Which sits there since the earth was curs'd
 For Man's transgression at the first ;
 Which, living through all centuries,
 Not once has seen the sun arise ;
 Whose life, to its cold circle charmed,
 The earth's whole summers have not warmed ;
 Which always—whitherso the stone
 Be flung—sits there, deaf, blind, alone ;—
 Aye, and shall not be driven out
 Till that which shuts him round about
 Break at the very Master's stroke,
 And the dust thereof vanish as smoke,
 And the seed of Man vanish as dust :—
 Even so within this world is Lust.

Come, come, what use in thoughts like this ?
 Poor little Jenny, good to kiss,—
 You'd not believe by what strange roads
 Thought travels, when your beauty goads
 A man to-night to think of toads !
 Jenny, wake up. . . . Why, there's the dawn !

And there's an early waggon drawn
 To market, and some sheep that jog
 Bleating before a barking dog ;
 And the old streets come peering through
 Another night that London knew ;
 And all as ghostlike as the lamps.

So on the wings of day decamps
 My last night's frolic. Glooms begin
 To shiver off as lights creep in
 Past the gauze curtains half drawn-to,
 And the lamp's doubled shade grows blue,—
 Your lamp, my Jenny, kept alight,
 Like a wise virgin's, all one night !
 And in the alcove coolly spread
 Glimmers with dawn your empty bed ;
 And yonder your fair face I see
 Reflected lying on my knee,

Where teems with first foreshadowings
 Your pier-glass scrawled with diamond rings :
 And on your bosom all night worn
 Yesterday's rose now droops forlorn,
 But dies not yet this summer morn.

And now without, as if some word
 Had called upon them that they heard,
 The London sparrows far and nigh
 Clamour together suddenly ;
 And Jenny's cage-bird grown awake
 Here in their song his part must take,
 Because here too the day doth break.

And somehow in myself the dawn
 Among stirred clouds and veils withdrawn
 Strikes greyly on her. Let her sleep.
 But will it wake her if I heap
 These cushions thus beneath her head
 Where my knee was ? No,—there's your bed,
 My Jenny, while you dream. And there
 I lay among your golden hair,
 Perhaps the subject of your dreams,
 These golden coins.

For still one deems
 That Jenny's flattering sleep confers
 New magic on the magic purse,—
 Grim web, how clogged with shrivelled flies !
 Between the threads fine fumes arise
 And shape their pictures in the brain.
 There roll no streets in glare and rain,
 Nor flagrant man-swine whets his tusk ;
 But delicately sighs in musk
 The homage of the dim boudoir ;
 Or like a palpitating star
 Thrilled into song, the opera-night
 Breathes faint in the quick pulse of light ;
 Or at the carriage-window shine
 Rich wares for choice ; or, free to dine,
 Whirls through its hour of health (divine
 For her) the concourse of the Park.
 And though in the discounted dark
 Her functions there and here are one,
 Beneath the lamps and in the sun
 There reigns at least the acknowledged belle
 Apparelled beyond parallel.
 Ah Jenny, yes, we know your dreams.

For even the Paphian Venus seems
 A goddess o'er the realms of love,
 When silver-shrined in shadowy grove :
 Aye, or let offerings nicely plac'd
 But hide Priapus to the waist,
 And whoso looks on him shall see
 An eligible deity.

Why, Jenny, waking here alone
 May help you to remember one,
 Though all the memory's long outworn
 Of many a double-pillowed morn.

I think I see you when you wake,
And rub your eyes for me, and shake
My gold, in rising, from your hair,
A Danaë for a moment there.

Jenny, my love rang true ! for still
Love at first sight is vague, until
That tinkling makes him audible.

And must I mock you to the last,
Ashamed of my own shame,—aghast
Because some thoughts not born amiss
Rose at a poor fair face like this ?
Well, of such thoughts so much I know :
In my life, as in hers, they show,
By a far gleam which I may near,
A dark path I can strive to clear.

Only one kiss. Good-bye, my dear.

A LAST CONFESSION

(*Regno Lombardo-Veneto, 1848*)

* * * * *

OUR Lombard country-girls along the coast
Wear daggers in their garters: for they know
That they might hate another girl to death
Or meet a German lover. Such a knife
I bought her, with a hilt of horn and pearl.

Father, you cannot know of all my thoughts
That day in going to meet her,—that last day
For the last time, she said;—of all the love
And all the hopeless hope that she might change
And go back with me. Ah! and everywhere,
At places we both knew along the road,
Some fresh shape of herself as once she was
Grew present at my side; until it seemed—
So close they gathered round me—they would all
Be with me when I reached the spot at last,
To plead my cause with her against herself
So changed. O Father, if you knew all this
You cannot know, then you would know too, Father,
And only then, if God can pardon me.
What can be told I'll tell, if you will hear.

I passed a village-fair upon my road,
And thought, being empty-handed, I would take
Some little present: such might prove, I said,
Either a pledge between us, or (God help me!)
A parting gift. And there it was I bought
The knife I spoke of, such as women wear.

That day, some three hours afterwards, I found
For certain, it must be a parting gift.
And, standing silent now at last, I looked
Into her scornful face; and heard the sea
Still trying hard to din into my ears
Some speech it knew which still might change her heart,
If only it could make me understand.
One moment thus. Another, and her face
Seemed further off than the last line of sea,
So that I thought, if now she were to speak
I could not hear her. Then again I knew
All, as we stood together on the sand
At Iglio, in the first thin shade o' the hills.

"Take it," I said, and held it out to her,
While the hilt glanced within my trembling hold ;
"Take it and keep it for my sake," I said.
Her neck unbent not, neither did her eyes
Move, nor her foot left beating of the sand ;
Only she put it by from her and laughed.

Father, you hear my speech and not her laugh ;
But God heard that. Will God remember all ?

It was another laugh than the sweet sound
Which rose from her sweet childish heart, that day
Eleven years before, when first I found her
Alone upon the hill-side ; and her curls
Shook down in the warm grass as she looked up
Out of her curls in my eyes bent to hers.
She might have served a painter to pourtray
That heavenly child which in the latter days
Shall walk between the lion and the lamb.
I had been for nights in hiding, worn and sick
And hardly fed ; and so her words at first
Seemed fiftul like the talking of the trees
And voices in the air that knew my name.
And I remember that I sat me down
Upon the slope with her, and thought the world
Must be all over or had never been,
We seemed there so alone. And soon she told me
Her parents both were gone away from her.
I thought perhaps she meant that they had died ;
But when I asked her this, she looked again
Into my face and said that yestereve
They kissed her long, and wept and made her weep,
And gave her all the bread they had with them,
And then had gone together up the hill
Where we were sitting now, and had walked on
Into the great red light ; "and so," she said,
"I have come up here too ; and when this evening
They step out of the light as they stepped in,
I shall be here to kiss them." And she laughed.

Then I bethought me suddenly of the famine ;
And how the church-steps throughout all the town,
When last I had been there a month ago,
Swarmed with starved folk ; and how the bread was weighed
By Austrians armed ; and women that I knew
For wives and mothers walked the public street,
Saying aloud that if their husbands feared
To snatch the children's food, themselves would stay
Till they had earned it there. So then this child
Was piteous to me ; for all told me then
Her parents must have left her to God's chance,
To man's or to the Church's charity,
Because of the great famine, rather than
To watch her growing thin between their knees.
With that, God took my mother's voice and spoke,
And sights and sounds came back and things long since,
And all my childhood found me on the hills ;
And so I took her with me.

I was young.

Scarce man then, Father : but the cause which gave
The wounds I die of now had brought me then

Some wounds already ; and I lived alone,
 As any hiding hunted man must live.
 It was no easy thing to keep a child
 In safety ; for herself it was not safe,
 And doubled my own danger : but I knew
 That God would help me.

Yet a little while

Pardon me, Father, if I pause. I think
 I have been speaking to you of some matters
 There was no need to speak of, have I not ?
 You do not know how clearly those things stood
 Within my mind, which I have spoken of,
 Nor how they strove for utterance. Life all past
 Is like the sky when the sun sets in it,
 Clearest where furthest off.

I told you how

She scorned my parting gift and laughed. And yet
 A woman's laugh's another thing sometimes :
 I think they laugh in Heaven. I know last night
 I dreamed I saw into the garden of God,
 Where women walked whose painted images
 I have seen with candles round them in the church.
 They bent this way and that, one to another,
 Playing : and over the long golden hair
 Of each there floated like a ring of fire
 Which when she stooped stooped with her, and when she rose
 Rose with her. Then a breeze flew in among them,
 As if a window had been opened in heaven
 For God to give His blessing from, before
 This world of ours should set ; (for in my dream
 I thought our world was setting, and the sun
 Flared, a spent taper ;) and beneath that gust
 The rings of light quivered like forest-leaves.
 Then all the blessed maidens who were there
 Stood up together, as it were a voice
 That called them ; and they threw their tresses back,
 And smote their palms, and all laughed up at once,
 For the strong heavenly joy they had in them
 To hear God bless the world. Wherewith I woke :
 And looking round, I saw as usual
 That she was standing there with her long locks
 Pressed to her side ; and her laugh ended theirs.

For always when I see her now, she laughs.
 And yet her childish laughter haunts me too,
 The life of this dead terror ; as in days
 When she, a child, dwelt with me. I must tell
 Something of those days yet before the end.

I brought her from the city—one such day
 When she was still a merry loving child,—
 The earliest gift I mind my giving her ;
 A little image of a flying Love
 Made of our coloured glass-ware, in his hands
 A dart of gilded metal and a torch.
 And him she kissed and me, and fain would know
 Why were his poor eyes blindfold, why the wings
 And why the arrow. What I knew I told
 Of Venus and of Cupid,—strange old tales.
 And when she heard that he could rule the loves

Of men and women, still she shook her head
And wondered; and, "Nay, nay," she murmured still,
"So strong, and he a younger child than I!"
And then she'd have me fix him on the wall
Fronting her little bed; and then again
She needs must fix him there herself, because
I gave him to her and she loved him so,
And he should make her love me better yet,
If women loved the more, the more they grew.
But the fit place upon the wall was high
For her, and so I held her in my arms:
And each time that the heavy pruning-hook
I gave her for a hammer slipped away
As it would often, still she laughed and laughed
And kissed and kissed me. But amid her mirth,
Just as she hung the image on the nail,
It slipped and all its fragments strewed the ground:
And as it fell she screamed, for in her hand
The dart had entered deeply and drawn blood.
And so her laughter turned to tears: and "Oh!"
I said, the while I bandaged the small hand,—
"That I should be the first to make you bleed,
Who love and love and love you!"—kissing still
The fingers till I got her safe to bed.
And still she sobbed,—"not for the pain at all,"
She said, "but for the Love, the poor good Love
You gave me." So she cried herself to sleep.

Another later thing comes back to me.
'Twas in those hardest foulest days of all,
When still from his shut palace, sitting clean
Above the splash of blood, old Metternich
(May his soul die, and never-dying worms
Feast on its pain for ever!) used to thin
His year's doomed hundreds daintily, each month
Thirties and fifties. This time, as I think,
Was when his thrift forbad the poor to take
That evil brackish salt which the dry rocks
Keep all through winter when the sea draws in.
The first I heard of it was a chance shot
In the street here and there, and on the stones
A stumbling clatter as of horse hemmed round.
Then, when she saw me hurry out of doors,
My gun slung at my shoulder and my knife
Stuck in my girdle, she smoothed down my hair
And laughed to see me look so brave, and leaped
Up to my neck and kissed me. She was still
A child; and yet that kiss was on my lips
So hot all day where the smoke shut us in.

For now, being always with her, the first love
I had—the father's, brother's love—was changed,
I think, in some wise; like a holy thought
Which is a prayer before one knows of it.
The first time I perceived this, I remember,
Was once when after hunting I came home
Weary, and she brought food and fruit for me,
And sat down at my feet upon the floor
Leaning against my side. But when I felt
Her sweet head reach from that low seat of hers

So high as to be laid upon my heart,
 I turned and looked upon my darling there
 And marked for the first time how tall she was ;
 And my heart beat with so much violence
 Under her cheek, I thought she could not choose
 But wonder at it soon and ask me why ;
 And so I bade her rise and eat with me.
 And when, remembering all and counting back
 The time, I made out fourteen years for her
 And told her so, she gazed at me with eyes
 As of the sky and sea on a grey day,
 And drew her long hands through her hair, and asked me
 If she was not a woman ; and then laughed :
 And as she stooped in laughing, I could see
 Beneath the growing throat the breasts half-globed
 Like folded lilies deepset in the stream.

Yes, let me think of her as then ; for so
 Her image, Father, is not like the sights
 Which come when you are gone. She had a mouth
 Made to bring death to life,—the underlip
 Sucked in, as if it strove to kiss itself.
 Her face was pearly pale, as when one stoops
 Over wan water ; and the dark crisped hair
 And the hair's shadow made it paler still :—
 Deep-serried locks, the dimness of the cloud
 Where the moon's gaze is set in eddying gloom.
 Her body bore her neck as the tree's stem
 Bears the top branch ; and as the branch sustains
 The flower of the year's pride, her high neck bore
 That face made wonderful with night and day.
 Her voice was swift, yet ever the last words
 Fell lingeringly ; and rounded finger-tips
 She had, that clung a little where they touched
 And then were gone o' the instant. Her great eyes,
 That sometimes turned half dizzily beneath
 The passionate lids, as faint, when she would speak,
 Had also in them hidden springs of mirth,
 Which under the dark lashes evermore
 Shook to her laugh, as when a bird flies low
 Between the water and the willow-leaves,
 And the shade quivers till he wins the light.

I was a moody comrade to her then,
 For all the love I bore her. Italy,
 The weeping desolate mother, long has claimed
 Her sons' strong arms to lean on, and their hands
 To lop the poisonous thicket from her path,
 Cleaving her way to light. And from her need
 Had grown the fashion of my whole poor life
 Which I was proud to yield her, as my father
 Had yielded his. And this had come to be
 A game to play, a love to clasp, a hate
 To wreak, all things together that a man
 Needs for his blood to ripen ; till at times
 All else seemed shadows, and I wondered still
 To see such life pass muster and be deemed
 Time's bodily substance. In those hours, no doubt,
 To the young girl my eyes were like my soul,—
 Dark wells of death-in-life that yearned for day.

And though she ruled me always, I remember
 That once when I was thus and she still kept
 Leaping about the place and laughing, I
 Did almost chide her; whereupon she knelt
 And putting her two hands into my breast
 Sang me a song. Are these tears in my eyes?
 'Tis long since I have wept for anything.
 I thought that song forgotten out of mind;
 And now, just as I spoke of it, it came
 All back. It is but a rude thing, ill rhymed,
 Such as a blind man chaunts and his dog hears
 Holding the platter, when the children run
 To merrier sport and leave him. Thus it goes:—

La bella donna *
 Piangendo disse:
 "Come son fisse
 Le stelle in cielo!
 Quel fiato anelo
 Dello stanco sole,
 Quanto m'assonna!
 È la luna, macchiata
 Come uno specchio
 Logoro e vecchio,—
 Faccia affannata,
 Che cosa vuole?

"Chè stelle, luna, e sole,
 Ciascun m'annoja
 E m'annojano insieme;
 Non me ne preme
 Nè ci prendo gioja.
 E veramente,
 Che le spalle sien franche
 E le braccia bianche

*She wept, sweet lady,
 And said in weeping:
 "What spell is keeping
 The stars so steady?
 Why does the power
 Of the sun's noon-hour
 To sleep so move me?
 And the moon in heaven,
 Stained where she passes
 As a worn-out glass is,—
 Wearily driven,
 Why walks she above me?

"Stars, moon, and sun too,
 I'm tired of either
 And all together!
 Whom speak they unto
 That I should listen?
 For very surely,
 Though my arms and shoulders
 Dazzle beholders,
 And my eyes glisten,
 All's nothing purely!
 What are words said for
 At all about them,
 If he they are made for
 Can do without them?"

She laughed, sweet lady,
 And said in laughing:
 "His hand clings half in

My own already!
 Oh! do you love me?
 Oh! speak of passion
 In no new fashion,
 No loud inveighings,
 But the old sayings
 You once said of me.

"You said: 'As summer,
 Through boughs grown brittle,
 Comes back a little
 Ere frosts benumb her,—
 So bring'st thou to me
 All leaves and flowers,
 Though autumn's gloomy
 To-day in the bowers.'

"Oh! does he love me,
 When my voice teaches
 The very speeches
 He then spoke of me?
 Alas! what flavour
 Still with me lingers?"
 (But she laughed as my kisses
 Glowed in her fingers
 With love's old blisses.)
 "Oh! what one favour
 Remains to woo him,
 Whose whole poor savour
 Belongs not to him?"

E il seno caldo e tondo,
 Non mi fa niente.
 Che cosa al mondo
 Posso più far di questi
 Se non piacciono a te, come dicesti ? ”

La donna rise
 E riprese ridendo :—
 “ Questa mano che prendo
 È dunque mia ?
 Tu m’ ami dunque ?
 Dimmelo ancora,
 Non in modo qualunque,
 Ma le parole
 Belle e precise
 Che dicesti pria.

‘ *Siccome suole
 La state talora
 (Dicesti) un qualche istante
 Tornare innanzi inverno,
 Così tu fai ch’ io scerno
 Le foglie tutte quante,
 Ben ch’ io certo tenessi
 Per passato l’ autunno.*

“ Eccolo il mio alunno !
 Io debbo insegnargli
 Quei cari detti istessi
 Ch’ ei mi disse una volta !
 Oimè ! Che cosa dargli,”
 (Ma ridea piano piano
 Dei baci in sulla mano,) ”
 “ Ch’ ei non m’abbia da lungo tempo tolta ? ”

That I should sing upon this bed !—with you
 To listen, and such words still left to say !
 Yet was it I that sang ? The voice seemed hers,
 As on the very day she sang to me ;
 When, having done, she took out of my hand
 Something that I had played with all the while
 And laid it down beyond my reach ; and so
 Turning my face round till it fronted hers,—
 “ Weeping or laughing, which was best ? ” she said.

But these are foolish tales. How should I show
 The heart that glowed then with love’s heat, each day
 More and more brightly ?—when for long years now
 The very flame that flew about the heart,
 And gave it fiery wings, has come to be
 The lapping blaze of hell’s environment
 Whose tongues all bid the molten heart despair.

Yet one more thing comes back on me to-night
 Which I may tell you : for it bore my soul
 Dread firstlings of the brood that rend it now.
 It chanced that in our last year’s wanderings
 We dwelt at Monza, far away from home,
 If home we had : and in the Duomo there
 I sometimes entered with her when she prayed.
 An image of Our Lady stands there, wrought

In marble by some great Italian hand
In the great days when she and Italy
Sat on one throne together : and to her
And to none else my loved one told her heart.
She was a woman then ; and as she knelt,—
Her sweet brow in the sweet brow's shadow there,—
They seemed two kindred forms whereby our land
(Whose work still serves the world for miracle)
Made manifest herself in womanhood.
Father, the day I speak of was the first
For weeks that I had borne her company
Into the Duomo ; and those weeks had been
Much troubled, for then first the glimpses came
Of some impenetrable restlessness
Growing in her to make her changed and cold.
And as we entered there that day, I bent
My eyes on the fair Image, and I said
Within my heart, " Oh turn her heart to me ! "
And so I left her to her prayers, and went
To gaze upon the pride of Monza's shrine,
Where in the sacristy the light still falls
Upon the Iron Crown of Italy,
On whose crowned heads the day has closed, nor yet
The daybreak gilds another head to crown.
But coming back, I wondered when I saw
That the sweet Lady of her prayers now stood
Alone without her ; until further off,
Before some new Madonna gaily decked,
Tinselled and gewgawed, a slight German toy,
I saw her kneel, still praying. At my step
She rose, and side by side we left the church.
I was much moved, and sharply questioned her
Of her transferred devotion ; but she seemed
Stubborn and heedless ; till she lightly laughed
And said : " The old Madonna ? Aye indeed,
She had my old thoughts,—this one has my new."
Then silent to the soul I held my way :
And from the fountains of the public place
Unto the pigeon-haunted pinnacles,
Bright wings and water winnowed the bright air ;
And stately with her laugh's subsiding smile
She went, with clear-swayed waist and towering neck
And hands held light before her ; and the face
Which long had made a day in my life's night
Was night in day to me ; as all men's eyes
Turned on her beauty, and she seemed to tread
Beyond my heart to the world made for her.

Ah there ! my wounds will snatch my sense again :
The pain comes billowing on like a full cloud
Of thunder, and the flash that breaks from it
Leaves my brain burning. That's the wound he gave,
The Austrian whose white coat I still made match
With his white face, only the two grew red
As suits his trade. The devil makes them wear
White for a livery, that the blood may show
Braver that brings them to him. So he looks
Sheer o'er the field and knows his own at once.

Give me a draught of water in that cup ;
My voice feels thick ; perhaps you do not hear ;

But you *must* hear. If you mistake my words
 And so absolve me, I am sure the blessing
 Will burn my soul. If you mistake my words
 And so absolve me, Father, the great sin
 Is yours, not mine: mark this: your soul shall burn
 With mine for it. I have seen pictures where
 Souls burned with Latin shriekings in their mouths:
 Shall my end be as theirs? Nay, but I know
 'Tis you shall shriek in Latin. Some bell rings,
 Rings through my brain: it strikes the hour in hell.

You see I cannot, Father; I have tried,
 But cannot, as you see. These twenty times
 Beginning, I have come to the same point
 And stopped. Beyond, there are but broken words
 Which will not let you understand my tale.
 It is that then we have her with us here,
 As when she wrung her hair out in my dream
 To-night, till all the darkness reeked of it.
 Her hair is always wet, for she has kept
 Its tresses wrapped about her side for years;
 And when she wrung them round over the floor,
 I heard the blood between her fingers hiss;
 So that I sat up in my bed and screamed
 Once and again; and once to once, she laughed.
 Look that you turn not now,—she's at your back:
 Gather your robe up, Father, and keep close,
 Or she'll sit down on it and send you mad.

At Iglio in the first thin shade o' the hills
 The sand is black and red. The black was black
 When what was spilt that day sank into it,
 And the red scarcely darkened. There I stood
 This night with her, and saw the sand the same.

* * * * *

What would you have me tell you? Father, father,
 How shall I make you know? You have not known
 The dreadful soul of woman, who one day
 Forgets the old and takes the new to heart,
 Forgets what man remembers, and therewith
 Forgets the man. Nor can I clearly tell
 How the change happened between her and me.
 Her eyes looked on me from an emptied heart
 When most my heart was full of her; and still
 In every corner of myself I sought
 To find what service failed her; and no less
 Than in the good time past, there all was hers.
 What do you love? Your Heaven? Conceive it spread
 For one first year of all eternity
 All round you with all joys and gifts of God;
 And then when most your soul is blent with it
 And all yields song together,—then it stands
 O' the sudden like a pool that once gave back
 Your image, but now drowns it and is clear
 Again,—or like a sun bewitched, that burns
 Your shadow from you, and still shines in sight.
 How could you bear it? Would you not cry out,
 Among those eyes grown blind to you, those ears
 That hear no more your voice you hear the same,—
 "God!" what is left but hell for company,

But hell, hell, hell ?"—until the name so breathed
 Whirled with hot wind and sucked you down in fire ?
 Even so I stood the day her empty heart
 Left her place empty in our home, while yet
 I knew not why she went nor where she went
 Nor how to reach her : so I stood the day
 When to my prayers at last one sight of her
 Was granted, and I looked on heaven made pale
 With scorn, and heard heaven mock me in that laugh.

O sweet, long sweet ! Was that some ghost of you,
 Even as your ghost that haunts me now,—twin shapes
 Of fear and hatred ? May I find you yet
 Mine when death wakes ? Ah ! be it even in flame,
 We may have sweetness yet, if you but say
 As once in childish sorrow : " Not my pain,
 My pain was nothing : oh your poor poor love,
 Your broken love ! "

My Father, have I not
 Yet told you the last things of that last day
 On which I went to meet her by the sea ?
 O God, O God ! but I must tell you all.

Midway upon my journey, when I stopped
 To buy the dagger at the village fair,
 I saw two cursed rats about the place
 I knew for spies—blood-sellers both. That day
 Was not yet over ; for three hours to come
 I prized my life : and so I looked around
 For safety. A poor painted mountebank
 Was playing tricks and shouting in a crowd.
 I knew he must have heard my name, so I
 Pushed past and whispered to him who I was,
 And of my danger. Straight he hustled me
 Into his booth, as it were in the trick,
 And brought me out next minute with my face
 All smeared in patches and a zany's gown ;
 And there I handed him his cups and balls
 And swung the sand-bags round to clear the ring
 For half an hour. The spies came once and looked ;
 And while they stopped, and made all sights and sounds
 Sharp to my startled senses, I remember
 A woman laughed above me. I looked up
 And saw where a brown-shouldered harlot leaned
 Half through a tavern window thick with vine.
 Some man had come behind her in the room
 And caught her by her arms, and she had turned
 With that coarse empty laugh on him, as now
 He munched her neck with kisses, while the vine
 Crawled in her back.

And three hours afterwards,
 When she that I had run all risks to meet
 Laughed as I told you, my life burned to death
 Within me, for I thought it like the laugh
 Heard at the fair. She had not left me long ;
 But all she might have changed to, or might change to,
 (I know nought since—she never speaks a word—)
 Seemed in that laugh. Have I not told you yet,
 Not told you all this time what happened, Father,
 When I had offered her the little knife,

And bade her keep it for my sake that loved her,
And she had laughed? Have I not told you yet?

“Take it,” I said to her the second time,
“Take it and keep it.” And then came a fire
That burnt my hand; and then the fire was blood,
And sea and sky were blood and fire, and all
The day was one red blindness; till it seemed,
Within the whirling brain's eclipse, that she
Or I or all things bled or burned to death.
And then I found her laid against my feet
And knew that I had stabbed her, and saw still
Her look in falling. For she took the knife
Deep in her heart, even as I bade her then,
And fell; and her stiff bodice scooped the sand
Into her bosom.

And she keeps it, see,
Do you not see she keeps it?—there, beneath
Wet fingers and wet tresses, in her heart.
For look you, when she stirs her hand, it shows
The little hilt of horn and pearl,—even such
A dagger as our women of the coast
Twist in their garters.

Father, I have done :
And from her side now she unwinds the thick
Dark hair; all round her side it is wet through,
But, like the sand at Iglio, does not change.
Now you may see the dagger clearly. Father,
I have told all: tell me at once what hope
Can reach me still. For now she draws it out
Slowly, and only smiles as yet: look, Father,
She scarcely smiles: but I shall hear her laugh
Soon, when she shows the crimson steel to God.

THE BURDEN OF NINEVEH

In our Museum galleries
To-day I lingered o'er the prize
Dead Greece vouchsafes to living eyes,—
Her Art for ever in fresh wise
 From hour to hour rejoicing me.
Sighing I turned at last to win
Once more the London dirt and din;
And as I made the swing-door spin
And issued, they were hoisting in
 A wingèd beast from Nineveh.

A human face the creature wore,
And hoofs behind and hoofs before,
And flanks with dark runes fretted o'er.
'Twas bull, 'twas mitred Minotaur,
 A dead disbowelled mystery:
The mummy of a buried faith
Stark from the charnel without scathe,
Its wings stood for the light to bathe,—
Such fossil cerements as might swathe
 The very corpse of Nineveh.

The print of its first rush-wrapping,
Wound ere it dried, still ribbed the thing.
What song did the brown maidens sing,
From purple mouths alternating,
 When that was woven languidly?
What vows, what rites, what prayers preferr'd,
What songs has the strange image heard?
In what blind vigil stood interr'd
For ages, till an English word
 Broke silence first at Nineveh?

Oh when upon each sculptured court,
Where even the wind might not resort,—
O'er which Time passed, of like import
With the wild Arab boys at sport,—
 A living face looked in to see:—
Oh seemed it not—the spell once broke—
As though the carven warriors woke,
As though the shaft the string forsook,
The cymbals clashed, the chariots shook,
 And there was life in Nineveh?

On London stones our sun anew
 The beast's recovered shadow threw,
 (No shade that plague of darkness knew,
 No light, no shade, while older grew
 By ages the old earth and sea.)
 Lo thou! could all thy priests have shown
 Such proof to make thy godhead known?
 From their dead Past thou liv'st alone;
 And still thy shadow is thine own,
 Even as of yore in Nineveh.

That day whereof we keep record,
 When near thy city-gates the Lord
 Sheltered His Jonah with a gourd,
 This sun, (I said) here present, pour'd
 Even thus this shadow that I see.
 This shadow has been shed the same
 From sun and moon,—from lamps which came
 For prayer,—from fifteen days of flame,
 The last, while smouldered to a name
 Sardanapalus' Nineveh.

Within thy shadow, haply, once
 Sennacherib has knelt, whose sons
 Smote him between the altar-stones:
 Or pale Semiramis her zones
 Of gold, her incense brought to thee,
 In love for grace, in war for aid: . . .
 Ay, and who else? . . . till 'neath thy shade
 Within his trenches newly made
 Last year the Christian knelt and pray'd—
 Not to thy strength—in Nineveh.*

Now, thou poor god, within this hall
 Where the blank windows blind the wall
 From pedestal to pedestal,
 The kind of light shall on thee fall
 Which London takes the day to be:
 While school-foundations in the act
 Of holiday, three files compact,
 Shall learn to view thee as a fact
 Connected with that zealous tract:
 "ROME,—Babylon and Nineveh."

Deemed they of this, those worshippers,
 When, in some mythic chain of verse
 Which man shall not again rehearse,
 The faces of thy ministers
 Yearned pale with bitter ecstasy?
 Greece, Egypt, Rome,—did any god
 Before whose feet men knelt unshod
 Deem that in this unblest abode
 Another scarce more unknown god
 Should house with him, from Nineveh?

* During the excavations, the Tiyari workmen held their services in the shadow of the great bulls,—(Layard's "*Nineveh*," chap. ix.)

Ah! in what quarries lay the stone
From which this pillared pile has grown,
Unto man's need how long unknown,
Since those thy temples, court and cone,
Rose far in desert history?

Ah! what is here that does not lie
All strange to thine awakened eye?
Ah! what is here can testify
(Save that dumb presence of the sky)
Unto thy day and Nineveh?

Why, of those mummies in the room
Above, there might indeed have come
One out of Egypt to thy home,
An alien. Nay, but were not some
Of these thine own "antiquity"?
And now,—they and their gods and thou
All relics here together,—now
Whose profit? whether bull or cow,
Isis or Ibis, who or how,
Whether of Thebes or Nineveh?

The consecrated metals found,
And ivory tablets, underground,
Winged teraphim and creatures crown'd.
When air and daylight filled the mound,
Fell into dust immediately.
And even as these, the images
Of awe and worship,—even as these,—
So, smitten with the sun's increase,
Her glory mouldered and did cease
From immemorial Nineveh.

The day her builders made their halt,
Those cities of the lake of salt
Stood firmly 'stablished without fault,
Made proud with pillars of basalt,
With sardonyx and porphyry.
The day that Jonah bore abroad
To Nineveh the voice of God,
A brackish lake lay in his road,
Where erst Pride fixed her sure abode,
As then in royal Nineveh.

The day when he, Pride's lord and Man's,
Showed all the kingdoms at a glance
To Him before whose countenance
The years recede, the years advance,
And said, Fall down and worship me:—
'Mid all the pomp beneath that look,
Then stirred there, haply, some rebuke,
Where to the wind the Salt Pools shook,
And in those tracts, of life forsook,
That knew thee not, O Nineveh!

Delicate harlot! On thy throne
Thou with a world beneath thee prone
In state for ages sat'st alone;
And needs were years and lustres flown
Ere strength of man could vanquish thee:

Whom even thy victor foes must bring,
 Still royal, among maids that sing
 As with doves' voices, taboring
 Upon their breasts, unto the King,—
 A kingly conquest, Nineveh !

. . . Here woke my thought. The wind's slow sway
 Had waxed ; and like the human play
 Of scorn that smiling spreads away,
 The sunshine shivered off the day :

 The callous wind, it seemed to me,
 Swept up the shadow from the ground :
 And pale as whom the Fates astound,
 The god forlorn stood winged and crown'd :
 Within I knew the cry lay bound
 Of the dumb soul of Nineveh.

And as I turned, my sense half shut
 Still saw the crowds of kerb and rut
 Go past as marshalled to the strut
 Of ranks in gypsum quaintly cut.

 It seemed in one same pageantry
 They followed forms which had been erst ;
 To pass, till on my sight should burst
 That future of the best or worst
 When some may question which was first,
 Of London or of Nineveh.

For as that Bull-god once did stand
 And watched the burial-clouds of sand,
 Till these at last without a hand
 Rose o'er his eyes, another land,

 And blinded him with destiny :—
 So may he stand again ; till now,
 In ships of unknown sail and prow,
 Some tribe of the Australian plough
 Bear him afar,—a relic now
 Of London, not of Nineveh !

Or it may chance indeed that when
 Man's age is hoary among men,—
 His centuries threescore and ten,—
 His furthest childhood shall seem then

 More clear than later times may be :
 Who, finding in this desert place
 This form, shall hold us for some race
 That walked not in Christ's lowly ways,
 But bowed its pride and vowed its praise
 Unto the God of Nineveh.

The smile rose first,—anon drew nigh
 The thought : . . . Those heavy wings spread high,
 So sure of flight, which do not fly ;
 That set gaze never on the sky ;

 Those scripted flanks it cannot see ;
 Its crown, a brow-contracting load ;
 Its planted feet which trust the sod ; . . .
 (So grew the image as I trod :)
 O Nineveh, was this thy God,—
 Thine also, mighty Nineveh ?

THE STAFF AND SCRIP

"WHO rules these lands?" the Pilgrim said.
"Stranger, Queen Blanchelys."
"And who has thus harried them?" he said.
"It was Duke Luke did this:
God's ban be his!"

The Pilgrim said: "Where is your house?
I'll rest there, with your will."
"You've but to climb these blackened boughs
And you'll see it over the hill,
For it burns still."

"Which road, to seek your Queen?" said he.
"Nay, nay, but with some wound
You'll fly back hither, it may be,
And by your blood i' the ground
My place be found."

"Friend, stay in peace. God keep your head,
And mine, where I will go;
For He is here and there," he said.
He passed the hill-side, slow.
And stood below.

The Queen sat idle by her loom;
She heard the arras stir,
And looked up sadly: through the room
The sweetness sickened her
Of musk and myrrh.

Her women, standing two and two,
In silence combed the fleece.
The Pilgrim said, "Peace be with you,
Lady;" and bent his knees.
She answered, "Peace."

Her eyes were like the wave within;
Like water-reed the poise
Of her soft body, dainty thin;
And like the water's noise
Her plaintive voice.

For him, the stream had never well'd
In desert tracts malign
So sweet; nor had he ever felt
So faint in the sunshine
Of Palestine.

Right so, he knew that he saw weep
Each night through every dream
The Queen's own face, confused in sleep
With visages supreme
Not known to him.

"Lady," he said, "your lands lie burnt
And waste: to meet your foe
All fear: this I have seen and learnt.
Say that it shall be so,
And I will go."

She gazed at him. "Your cause is just,
For I have heard the same,"
He said: "God's strength shall be my trust.
Fall it to good or grame,
'Tis in His name."

"Sir, you are thanked. My cause is dead.
Why should you toil to break
A grave, and fall therein?" she said.
He did not pause but spake:
"For my vow's sake."

"Can such vows be, Sir—to God's ear,
Not to God's will?" "My vow
Remains: God heard me there as here,"
He said with reverent brow,
"Both then and now."

They gazed together, he and she,
The minute while he spoke;
And when he ceased, she suddenly
Looked round upon her folk
As though she woke.

"Fight, Sir," she said; "my prayers in pain
Shall be your fellowship."
He whispered one among her train,—
"To-morrow bid her keep
This staff and scrip."

She sent him a sharp sword, whose belt
About his body there
As sweet as her own arms he felt.
He kissed its blade, all bare,
Instead of her.

She sent him a green banner wrought
With one white lily stem,
To bind his lance with when he fought.
He writ upon the same
And kissed her name.

She sent him a white shield, whereon
She bade that he should trace
His will. He blent fair hues that shone,
And in a golden space
He kissed her face.

Born of the day that died, that eve
Now dying sank to rest;
As he, in likewise taking leave,
Once with a heaving breast
Looked to the west.

And there the sunset skies unseal'd,
Like lands he never knew,
Beyond to-morrow's battle-field
Lay open out of view
To ride into.

Next day till dark the women pray'd:
Nor any might know there
How the fight went: the Queen has bade
That there do come to her
No messenger.

The Queen is pale, her maidens ail;
And to the organ-tones
They sing but faintly, who sang well
The matin-orisons,
The lauds and nones.

Lo, Father, is thine ear inclin'd,
And hath thine angel pass'd?
For these thy watchers now are blind
With vigil, and at last
Dizzy with fast.

Weak now to them the voice o' the priest
As any trance affords;
And when each anthem failed and ceas'd,
It seemed that the last chords
Still sang the words.

"Oh what is the light that shines so red?
'Tis long since the sun set;"
Quoth the youngest to the eldest maid:
"'Twas dim but now, and yet
The light is great."

Quoth the other: "'Tis our sight is dazed
That we see flame i' the air."
But the Queen held her brows and gazed,
And said, "It is the glare
Of torches there."

"Oh what are the sounds that rise and spread?
All day it was so still;"
Quoth the youngest to the eldest maid:
"Unto the furthest hill
The air they fill."

Quoth the other: "'Tis our sense is blurr'd
With all the chants gone by."
But the Queen held her breath and heard,
And said, "It is the cry
Of Victory."

The first of all the rout was sound,
The next were dust and flame,
And then the horses shook the ground :
And in the thick of them
A still band came.

" Oh what do ye bring out of the fight,
Thus hid beneath these boughs ? "
" Thy conquering guest returns to-night,
And yet shall not carouse,
Queen, in thy house."

" Uncover ye his face," she said.
" O changed in little space ! "
She cried, " O pale that was so red !
O God, O God of grace !
Cover his face."

His sword was broken in his hand
Where he had kissed the blade.
" O soft steel that could not withstand !
O my hard heart unstayed,
That prayed and prayed ! "

His bloodied banner crossed his mouth
Where he had kissed her name.
" O east, and west, and north, and south,
Fair flew my web, for shame,
To guide Death's aim ! "

The tints were shredded from his shield
Where he had kissed her face.
" Oh, of all gifts that I could yield,
Death only keeps its place,
My gift and grace ! "

Then stepped a damsel to her side,
And spoke, and needs must weep :
" For his sake, lady, if he died,
He prayed of thee to keep
This staff and scrip."

That night they hung above her bed,
Till morning wet with tears.
Year after year above her head
Her bed his token wears,
Five years, ten years.

That night the passion of her grief
Shook them as there they hung.
Each year the wind that shed the leaf
Shook them and in its tongue
A message flung.

And once she woke with a clear mind
That letters writ to calm
Her soul lay in the scrip ; to find
Only a torpid balm
And dust of palm.

They shook far off with palace sport
When joust and dance were rife ;
And the hunt shook them from the court ;
For hers, in peace or strife,
Was a Queen's life.

A Queen's death now : as now they shake
To gusts in chapel dim,—
Hung where she sleeps, not seen to wake,
(Carved lovely white and slim),
With them by him.

Stand up to-day, still armed, with her,
Good knight, before His brow
Who then as now was here and there,
Who had in mind thy vow
Then even as now.

The lists are set in Heaven to-day,
The bright pavilions shine ;
Fair hangs thy shield, and none gainsay ;
The trumpets sound in sign
That she is thine.

Not tithed with days' and years' decease
He pays thy wage He owed,
But with imperishable peace
Here in His own abode
Thy jealous God.

SISTER HELEN

"WHY did you melt your waxen man,
Sister Helen?
To-day is the third since you began."
"The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven !)

"But if you have done your work aright,
Sister Helen,
You'll let me play, for you said I might."
"Be very still in your play to-night,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Third night, to-night, between Hell and Heaven !)

"You said it must melt ere vesper-bell,
Sister Helen;
If now it be molten, all is well."
"Even so,—nay, peace! you cannot tell,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
O what is this, between Hell and Heaven ?)

"Oh the waxen knave was plump to-day,
Sister Helen;
How like dead folk he has dropped away!"
"Nay now, of the dead what can you say,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What of the dead, between Hell and Heaven ?)

"See, see, the sunken pile of wood,
Sister Helen,
Shines through the thinned wax red as blood!"
"Nay now, when looked you yet on blood,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven !)

"Now close your eyes, for they're sick and sore,
Sister Helen,
And I'll play without the gallery door."
"Aye, let me rest,—I'll lie on the floor,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What rest to-night, between Hell and Heaven ?)

"Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,
 Sister Helen,
 He sickened, and lies since then forlorn."
 "For bridegroom's side is the bride a thorn,
 Little brother?"
 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and Heaven !)

"Three days and nights he has lain abed,
 Sister Helen,
 And he prays in torment to be dead."
 "The thing may chance, if he have prayed,
 Little brother!"
 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven !)

"But he has not ceased to cry to-day,
 Sister Helen,
 That you should take your curse away."
 "My prayer was heard,—he need but pray,
 Little brother!"
 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven ?)

"But he says, till you take back your ban,
 Sister Helen,
 His soul would pass, yet never can."
 "Nay, then shall I slay a living man,
 Little brother?"
 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven !)

"But he calls for ever on your name,
 Sister Helen,
 And says that he melts before a flame."
 "My heart for his pleasure fared the same
 Little brother."
 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven !)

"Here's Keith of Westholm riding fast,
 Sister Helen,
 For I know the white plume on the blast."
 "The hour, the sweet hour I forecast,
 Little brother!"
 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven ?)

"He stops to speak, and he stills his horse,
 Sister Helen;
 But his words are drowned in the wind's course."
 "Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce,
 Little brother!"
 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
What word now heard, between Hell and Heaven ?)

"Oh he says that Keith of Ewern's cry,
 Sister Helen,
 Is ever to see you ere he die."
 "In all that his soul sees, there am I,
 Little brother!"
 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
The soul's one sight, between Hell and Heaven !)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,
Sister Helen,
And bids you mind the banks of Boyne."

"What else he broke will he ever join,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
No, never joined, between Hell and Heaven !)

"He yields you these and craves full fain,
Sister Helen,
You pardon him in his mortal pain."
"What else he took will he give again,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Not twice to give, between Hell and Heaven !)

"He calls your name in an agony,
Sister Helen,
That even dead Love must weep to see."
"Hate, born of Love, is blind as he,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven !)

"Oh it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white hair on the blast."
"The short short hour will soon be past,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven !)

"He looks at me and he tries to speak,
Sister Helen,
But oh! his voice is sad and weak!"
"What here should the mighty Baron seek,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven ?)

"Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,
Sister Helen,
The body dies but the soul shall live."
"Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven !)

"Oh he prays you, as his heart would rive,
Sister Helen,
To save his dear son's soul alive."
"Fire cannot slay it, it shall thrive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven !)

"He cries to you, kneeling in the road,
Sister Helen,
To go with him for the love of God!"
"The way is long to his son's abode,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The way is long, between Hell and Heaven !)

"A lady's here, by a dark steed brought,
Sister Helen,

So darkly clad, I saw her not."

"See her now or never see aught,

Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

What more to see, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Her hood falls back, and the moon shines fair,
Sister Helen,

On the Lady of Ewern's golden hair."

"Blest hour of my power and her despair,

Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

Hour blest and bann'd, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Pale, pale her cheeks, that in pride did glow,
Sister Helen,

'Neath the bridal-wreath three days ago."

"One morn for pride and three days for woe,

Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

Three days, three nights, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Her clasped hands stretch from her bending head,
Sister Helen;

With the loud wind's wail her sobs are wed."

"What wedding-strains hath her bridal-bed,

Little brother?"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

What strain but death's, between Hell and Heaven?)

"She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,
Sister Helen,—

She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon."

"Oh! might I but hear her soul's blithe tune,

Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

Her woe's dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven!)

"They've caught her to Westholm's saddle-bow,
Sister Helen,

And her moonlit hair gleams white in its flow."

"Let it turn whiter than winter snow,

Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

Woe-withered gold, between Hell and Heaven!)

"O Sister Helen, you heard the bell,
Sister Helen!

More loud than the vesper-chime it fell."

"No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,

Little brother!"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Alas! but I fear the heavy sound,
Sister Helen;

Is it in the sky or in the ground?"

"Say, have they turned their horses round,

Little brother?"

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*

What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They have raised the old man from his knee,
Sister Helen,
And they ride in silence hastily."

"More fast the naked soul doth flee,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,
Sister Helen,
But the lady's dark steed goes alone."
"And lonely her bridegroom's soul hath flown,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh the wind is sad in the iron chill,
Sister Helen,
And weary sad they look by the hill."
"But he and I are sadder still,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!)

"See, see, the wax has dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,
And the flames are winning up apace!"
"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Ah! what white thing at the door has cross'd?
Sister Helen?
Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?"
"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven!)

LOVE'S NOCTURN

MASTER of the murmuring courts
Where the shapes of sleep convene!—
Lo! my spirit here exhorts
All the powers of thy demesne
For their aid to woo my queen.
What reports
Yield thy jealous courts unseen?

Vaporous, unaccountable,
Dreamworld lies forlorn of light,
Hollow like a breathing shell.
Ah! that from all dreams I might
Choose one dream and guide its flight!
I know well
What her sleep should tell to-night.

There the dreams are multitudes:
Some that will not wait for sleep,
Deep within the August woods;
Some that hum while rest may steep
Weary labour laid a-heap;
Interludes,
Some, of grievous moods that weep.

Poets' fancies all are there:
There the elf-girls flood with wings
Valleys full of plaintive air;
There breathe perfumes; there in rings
Whirl the foam-bewildered springs;
Siren there
Winds her dizzy hair and sings.

Thence the one dream mutually
Dreamed in bridal unison,
Less than waking ecstasy;
Half-formed visions that make moan
In the house of birth alone;
And what we
At death's wicket see, unknown.

But for mine own sleep, it lies
In one gracious form's control,
Fair with honourable eyes,
Lamps of a translucent soul:
O their glance is loftiest dole,
Sweet and wise,
Wherein Love descries his goal.

Reft of her, my dreams are all
 Clammy trance that fears the sky :
 Changing footpaths shift and fall ;
 From polluted coverts nigh,
 Miserable phantoms sigh ;
 Quakes the pall,
 And the funeral goes by.

Master, is it soothly said
 That, as echoes of man's speech
 Far in secret clefts are made,
 So do all men's bodies reach
 Shadows o'er thy sunken beach,—
 Shape or shade
 In those halls pourtrayed of each ?

Ah ! might I, by thy good grace
 Groping in the windy stair,
 (Darkness and the breath of space
 Like loud waters everywhere,)
 Meeting mine own image there
 Face to face,
 Send it from that place to her !

Nay, not I ; but oh ! do thou,
 Master, from thy shadowkind
 Call my body's phantom now :
 Bid it bear its face declin'd
 Till its flight her slumbers find,
 And her brow
 Feel its presence bow like wind.

Where in groves the gracile Spring
 Trembles, with mute orison
 Confidently strengthening,
 Water's voice and wind's as one
 Shed an echo in the sun.
 Soft as Spring,
 Master, bid it sing and moan.

Song shall tell how glad and strong
 Is the night she soothes away ;
 Moan shall grieve with that parched tongue
 Of the brazen hours of day :
 Sounds as of the springtide they,
 Moan and song,
 While the chill months long for May.

Not the prayers which with all leave
 The world's fluent woes prefer,—
 Not the praise the world doth give,
 Dulcet fulsome whisperer ;—
 Let it yield my love to her,
 And achieve
 Strength that shall not grieve or err.

PRINCIPAL POEMS

Wheresoe'er my dreams befall,
 Both at night-watch, (let it say,)
 And where round the sundial
 The reluctant hours of day,
 Heartless, hopeless of their way,
 Rest and call;—
 There her glance doth fall and stay.

Suddenly her face is there :
 So do mounting vapours wreath
 Subtle-scented transports where
 The black firwood sets its teeth.
 Part the boughs and look beneath,—
 Lilies share
 Secret waters there, and breathe.

Master, bid my shadow bend
 Whispering thus till birth of light,
 Lest new shapes that sleep may send
 Scatter all its work to flight;—
 Master, master of the night,
 Bid it spend
 Speech, song, prayer, and end aright.

Yet, ah me ! if at her head
 There another phantom lean
 Murmuring o'er the fragrant bed,—
 Ah ! and if my spirit's queen
 Smile those alien prayers between,—
 Ah ! poor shade !
 Shall it strive, or fade unseen ?

How should love's own messenger
 Strive with love and be love's foe ?
 Master, nay ! If thus, in her,
 Sleep a wedded heart should show,—
 Silent let mine image go,
 Its old share
 Of thy spell-bound air to know.

Like a vapour wan and mute,
 Like a flame, so let it pass ;
 One low sigh across her lute,
 One dull breath against her glass ;
 And to my sad soul, alas !
 One salute
 Cold as when Death's foot shall pass.

Then, too, let all hopes of mine,
 All vain hopes by night and day,
 Slowly at thy summoning sign
 Rise up pallid and obey.
 Dreams, if this is thus, were they :—
 Be they thine,
 And to dreamworld pine away.

Yet from old time, life, not death,
Master, in thy rule is rife :
Lo ! through thee, with mingling breath,
Adam woke beside his wife.
O Love, bring me so, for strife,
Force and faith,
Bring me so not death but life !

Yea, to Love himself is pour'd
This frail song of hope and fear.
Thou art Love, of one accord
With kind Sleep to bring her near,
Still-eyed, deep-eyed, ah how dear !
Master, Lord,
In her name implor'd, O hear !

THE HOUSE OF LIFE : A SONNET-SEQUENCE

PART I YOUTH AND CHANGE

PART II CHANGE AND FATE

(The present full series of *The House of Life* consists of sonnets only. It will be evident that many among those now first added are still the work of earlier years.—1881.)

*A Sonnet is a moment's monument,—
Memorial from the Soul's eternity
To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fulness reverent :
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule ; and let Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.*

*A Sonnet is a coin : its face reveals
The soul,—its converse, to what Power 'tis due :—
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve ; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.*

PART I.—YOUTH AND CHANGE

SONNET I

LOVE ENTHRONED

I MARKED all kindred Powers the heart finds fair :—
Truth, with awed lips ; and Hope, with eyes upcast ;
And Fame, whose loud wings fan the ashen Past
To signal-fires, Oblivion's flight to scare ;
And Youth, with still some single golden hair
Unto his shoulder clinging, since the last
Embrace wherein two sweet arms held him fast ;
And Life, still wreathing flowers for Death to wear.

Love's throne was not with these ; but far above
All passionate wind of welcome and farewell
He sat in breathless bowers they dream not of ;
Though Truth foreknow Love's heart, and Hope foretell,
And Fame be for Love's sake desirable,
And Youth be dear, and Life be sweet to Love,

SONNET II

BRIDAL BIRTH

As when desire, long darkling, dawns, and first
 The mother looks upon the newborn child,
 Even so my Lady stood at gaze and smiled
 When her soul knew at length the Love it nurs'd.
 Born with her life, creature of poignant thirst
 And exquisite hunger, at her heart Love lay
 Quickening in darkness, till a voice that day
 Cried on him, and the bonds of birth were burst.

Now, shadowed by his wings, our faces yearn
 Together, as his full-grown feet now range
 The grove, and his warm hands our couch prepare :
 Till to his song our bodiless souls in turn
 Be born his children, when Death's nuptial change
 Leaves us for light the halo of his hair.

SONNET III

LOVE'S TESTAMENT

O THOU who at Love's hour ecstatically
 Unto my heart dost evermore present,
 Clothed with his fire, thy heart his testament ;
 Whom I have neared and felt thy breath to be
 The inmost incense of his sanctuary ;
 Who without speech hast owned him, and, intent
 Upon his will, thy life with mine hast blent,
 And murmured, " I am thine, thou'rt one with me ! "

O what from thee the grace, to me the prize,
 And what to Love the glory,—when the whole
 Of the deep stair thou tread'st to the dim shoal
 And weary water of the place of sighs,
 And there dost work deliverance, as thine eyes
 Draw up my prisoned spirit to thy soul !

SONNET IV

LOVESIGHT

WHEN do I see thee most, beloved one ?
 When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
 Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
 The worship of that Love through thee made known ?
 Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)
 Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
 Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
 And my soul only sees thy soul its own ?

O love, my love ! if I no more should see
 Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
 Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
 How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
 The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
 The wind of Death's imperishable wing ?

SONNET V

HEART'S HOPE

By what word's power, the key of paths untrod,
 Shall I the difficult deeps of Love explore,
 Till parted waves of Song yield up the shore
 Even as that sea which Israel crossed dryshod?
 For lo! in some poor rhythmic period,
 Lady, I fain would tell how evermore
 Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
 Thee from myself, neither our love from God.

Yea, in God's name, and Love's, and thine, would I
 Draw from one loving heart such evidence
 As to all hearts all things shall signify;
 Tender as dawn's first hill-fire, and intense
 As instantaneous penetrating sense,
 In Spring's birth-hour, of other Springs gone by.

SONNET VI

THE KISS

WHAT smouldering senses in death's sick delay
 Or seizure of malign vicissitude
 Can rob this body of honour, or denude
 This soul of wedding-raiment worn to-day?
 For lo! even now my lady's lips did play
 With these my lips such consonant interlude
 As laurelled Orpheus longed for when he wooed
 The half-drawn hungering face with that last lay.

I was a child beneath her touch,—a man
 When breast to breast we clung, even I and she,—
 A spirit when her spirit looked through me,—
 A god when all our life-breath met to fan
 Our life-blood, till love's emulous ardours ran,
 Fire within fire, desire in deity.

SONNET VII

NUPTIAL SLEEP

At length their long kiss severed, with sweet smart:
 And as the last slow sudden drops are shed
 From sparkling eaves when all the storm has fled,
 So singly flagged the pulses of each heart.
 Their bosoms sundered, with the opening start
 Of married flowers to either side outspread
 From the knit stem; yet still their mouths, burnt red,
 Fawned on each other where they lay apart.

Sleep sank them lower than the tide of dreams,
 And their dreams watched them sink, and slid away.
 Slowly their souls swam up again, through gleams
 Of watered light and dull drowned waifs of day;
 Till from some wonder of new woods and streams
 He woke, and wondered more: for there she lay.

SONNET VII

SUPREME SURRENDER

To all the spirits of Love that wander by
 Along his love-sown harvest-field of sleep
 My lady lies apparent; and the deep
 Calls to the deep; and no man sees but I.
 The bliss so long afar, at length so nigh,
 Rests there attained. Methinks proud Love must weep
 When Fate's control doth from his harvest reap
 The sacred hour for which the years did sigh.

First touched, the hand now warm around my neck
 Taught memory long to mock desire: and lo!
 Across my breast the abandoned hair doth flow,
 Where one shorn tress long stirred the longing ache:
 And next the heart that trembled for its sake
 Lies the queen-heart in sovereign overthrow.

SONNET VIII

LOVE'S LOVERS

SOME ladies love the jewels in Love's zone,
 And gold-tipped darts he hath for painless play
 In idle scornful hours he flings away;
 And some that listen to his lute's soft tone
 Do love to vaunt the silver praise their own;
 Some prize his blindfold sight; and there be they
 Who kissed his wings which brought him yesterday
 And thank his wings to-day that he is flown.

My lady only loves the heart of Love:
 Therefore Love's heart, my lady, hath for thee
 His bower of unimagined flower and tree:
 There kneels he now, and all-anhungered of
 Thine eyes grey-lit in shadowing hair above,
 Seals with thy mouth his immortality.

SONNET IX

PASSION AND WORSHIP

ONE flame-winged brought a white-winged harp-player
 Even where my lady and I lay all alone;
 Saying: "Behold, this minstrel is unknown;
 Bid him depart, for I am minstrel here:
 Only my strains are to Love's dear ones dear."
 Then said I: "Through thine hautboy's rapturous tone
 Unto my lady still this harp makes moan,
 And still she deems the cadence deep and clear."

Then said my lady: "Thou art Passion of Love,
 And this Love's Worship: both he plights to me.
 Thy mastering music walks the sunlit sea:
 But where wan water trembles in the grove
 And the wan moon is all the light thereof,
 This harp still makes my name its voluntary."

PRINCIPAL POEMS

SONNET X

THE PORTRAIT

O LORD of all compassionate control,
 O Love! let this my lady's picture glow
 Under my hand to praise her name, and show
 Even of her inner self the perfect whole:
 That he who seeks her beauty's furthest goal,
 Beyond the light that the sweet glances throw
 And refluent wave of the sweet smile, may know
 The very sky and sea-line of her soul.

Lo! it is done. Above the enthroning throat
 The mouth's mould testifies of voice and kiss,
 The shadowed eyes remember and foresee.
 Her face is made her shrine. Let all men note
 That in all years (O Love, thy gift is this!)
 They that would look on her must come to me.

SONNET XI

THE LOVE-LETTER

WARMED by her hand and shadowed by her hair
 As close she leaned and poured her heart through thee,
 Whereof the articulate throbs accompany
 The smooth black stream that makes thy whiteness fair,—
 Sweet fluttering sheet, even of her breath aware,—
 Oh let thy silent song disclose to me
 That soul wherewith her lips and eyes agree
 Like married music in Love's answering air.

Fain had I watched her when, at some fond thought,
 Her bosom to the writing closelier press'd,
 And her breast's secrets peered into her breast;
 When, through eyes raised an instant, her soul sought
 My soul, and from the sudden confluence caught
 The words that made her love the loveliest.

SONNET XII

THE LOVERS' WALK

SWEET twining hedgeflowers wind-stirred in no wise
 On this June day; and hand that clings in hand:—
 Still glades; and meeting faces scarcely fann'd:—
 An osier-odoured stream that draws the skies
 Deep to its heart; and mirrored eyes in eyes:—
 Fresh hourly wonder o'er the Summer land
 Of light and cloud; and two souls softly spann'd
 With one o'erarching heaven of smiles and sighs:—

Even such their path, whose bodies lean unto
 Each other's visible sweetness amorously,—
 Whose passionate hearts lean by Love's high decree
 Together on his heart for ever true,
 As the cloud-foaming firmamental blue
 Rests on the blue line of a foamless sea.

SONNET XIII

YOUTH'S ANTIPHONY

"I LOVE you, sweet: how can you ever learn
 How much I love you?" "You I love even so,
 And so I learn it." "Sweet, you cannot know
 How fair you are." "If fair enough to earn
 Your love, so much is all my love's concern."
 "My love grows hourly, sweet." "Mine too doth grow,
 Yet love seemed full so many hours ago!"
 Thus lovers speak, till kisses claim their turn.

Ah! happy they to whom such words as these
 In youth have served for speech the whole day long,
 Hour after hour, remote from the world's throng,
 Work, contest, fame, all life's confederate pleas,—
 What while Love breathed in sighs and silences
 Through two blent souls one rapturous undersong.

SONNET XIV

YOUTH'S SPRING-TRIBUTE

ON this sweet bank your head thrice sweet and dear
 I lay, and spread your hair on either side,
 And see the newborn woodflowers bashful-eyed
 Look through the golden tresses here and there.
 On these debateable borders of the year
 Spring's foot half falters; scarce she yet may know
 The leafless blackthorn-blossom from the snow;
 And through her bowers the wind's way still is clear.

But April's sun strikes down the glades to-day;
 So shut your eyes upturned, and feel my kiss
 Creep, as the Spring now thrills through every spray,
 Up your warm throat to your warm lips: for this
 Is even the hour of Love's sworn suitservice,
 With whom cold hearts are counted castaway.

SONNET XV

THE BIRTH-BOND

HAVE you not noted, in some family
 Where two were born of a first marriage-bed,
 How still they own their gracious bond, though fed
 And nursed on the forgotten breast and knee?—
 How to their father's children they shall be
 In act and thought of one goodwill; but each
 Shall for the other have, in silence speech,
 And in a word complete community?

Even so, when first I saw you, seemed it, love,
 That among souls allied to mine was yet
 One nearer kindred than life hinted of.
 O born with me somewhere that men forget,
 And though in years of sight and sound unmet,
 Known for my soul's birth-partner well enough!

PRINCIPAL POEMS

SONNET XVI

A DAY OF LOVE

THOSE envied places which do know her well,
 And are so scornful of this lonely place,
 Even now for once are emptied of her grace :
 Nowhere but here she is : and while Love's spell
 From his predominant presence doth compel
 All alien hours, an outworn populace,
 The hours of Love fill full the echoing space
 With sweet confederate music favourable.

Now many memories make solicitous
 The delicate love-lines of her mouth, till, lit
 With quivering fire, the words take wing from it ;
 As here between our kisses we sit thus
 Speaking of things remembered, and so sit
 Speechless while things forgotten call to us.

SONNET XVII

BEAUTY'S PAGEANT

WHAT dawn-pulse at the heart of heaven, or last
 Incarnate flower of culminating day,—
 What marshalled marvels on the skirts of May,
 Or song full-quired, sweet June's encomiast ;
 What glory of change by Nature's hand amass'd
 Can vie with all those moods of varying grace
 Which o'er one loveliest woman's form and face
 Within this hour, within this room, have pass'd ?

Love's very vesture and elect disguise
 Was each fine movement,—wonder new-begot
 Of lily or swan or swan-stemmed galiot ;
 Joy to his sight who now the sadlier sighs,
 Parted again ; and sorrow yet for eyes
 Unborn, that read these words and saw her not.

SONNET XVIII

GENIUS IN BEAUTY

BEAUTY like hers is genius. Not the call
 Of Homer's or of Dante's heart sublime,—
 Not Michael's hand furrowing the zones of time,—
 Is more with compassed mysteries musical ;
 Nay, not in Spring's or Summer's sweet footfall
 More gathered gifts exuberant Life bequeaths
 Than doth this sovereign face, whose love-spell breathes
 Even from its shadowed contour on the wall.

As many men are poets in their youth,
 But for one sweet-strung soul the wires prolong
 Even through all change the indomitable song ;
 So in like wise the envenomed years, whose tooth
 Rends shallower grace with ruin void of ruth,
 Upon this beauty's power shall wreak no wrong.

SONNET XIX

SILENT NOON

YOUR hands lie open in the long fresh grass,—
 The finger-points look through like rosy blooms :
 Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
 'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.
 All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
 Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge
 Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge.
 'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly
 Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky :—
 So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.
 Oh ! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
 This close-companioned inarticulate hour
 When twofold silence was the song of love.

SONNET XX

GRACIOUS MOONLIGHT

EVEN as the moon grows queenlier in mid-space
 When the sky darkens, and her cloud-rapt car
 Thrills with intenser radiance from afar,—
 So lambent, lady, beams thy sovereign grace
 When the drear soul desires thee. Of that face
 What shall be said,—which, like a governing star,
 Gathers and garners from all things that are
 Their silent penetrative loveliness ?

O'er water-daisies and wild waifs of Spring,
 There where the iris rears its gold-crowned sheaf
 With flowering rush and sceptred arrow-leaf,
 So have I marked Queen Dian, in bright ring
 Of cloud above and wave below, take wing
 And chase night's gloom, as thou the spirit's grief.

SONNET XXI

LOVE-SWEETNESS

SWEET dimness of her loosened hair's downfall
 About thy face ; her sweet hands round thy head
 In gracious fostering union garlanded ;
 Her tremulous smiles ; her glances' sweet recall
 Of love ; her murmuring sighs memorial ;
 Her mouth's culled sweetness by thy kisses shed
 On cheeks and neck and eyelids, and so led
 Back to her mouth which answers there for all :—

What sweeter than these things, except the thing
 In lacking which all these would lose their sweet :—
 The confident heart's still fervour : the swift beat
 And soft subsidence of the spirit's wing,
 Then when it feels, in cloud-girt wayfaring,
 The breath of kindred plumes against its feet ?

PRINCIPAL POEMS

SONNET XXII

HEART'S HAVEN

SOMETIMES she is a child within mine arms,
 Cowering beneath dark wings that love must chase,—
 With still tears showering and averted face,
 Inexplicably filled with faint alarms :
 And oft from mine own spirit's hurtling harms
 I crave the refuge of her deep embrace,—
 Against all ills the fortified strong place
 And sweet reserve of sovereign counter-charms.

And Love, our light at night and shade at noon,
 Lulls us to rest with songs, and turns away
 All shafts of shelterless tumultuous day.
 Like the moon's growth, his face gleams through his tune ;
 And as soft waters warble to the moon,
 Our answering spirits chime one roundelay.

SONNET XXIII

LOVE'S BAUBLES

I STOOD where Love in brimming armfuls bore
 Slight wanton flowers and foolish toys of fruit :
 And round him ladies thronged in warm pursuit,
 Fingered and lipped and proffered the strange store.
 And from one hand the petal and the core
 Savoured of sleep ; and cluster and curled shoot
 Seemed from another hand like shame's salute,—
 Gifts that I felt my cheek was blushing for.

At last Love bade my Lady give the same :
 And as I looked, the dew was light thereon ;
 And as I took them, at her touch they shone
 With inmost heaven-hue of the heart of flame.
 And then Love said : " Lo ! when the hand is hers,
 Follies of love are love's true ministers."

SONNET XXIV

PRIDE OF YOUTH

EVEN as a child, of sorrow that we give
 The dead, but little in his heart can find,
 Since without need of thought to his clear mind
 Their turn it is to die and his to live :—
 Even so the winged New Love smiles to receive
 Along his eddying plumes the auroral wind,
 Nor, forward glorying, casts one look behind
 Where night-rack shrouds the Old Love fugitive.

There is a change in every hour's recall,
 And the last cowslip in the fields we see
 On the same day with the first corn-poppy.
 Alas for hourly change ! Alas for all
 The loves that from his hand proud Youth lets fall,
 Even as the beads of a told rosary !

SONNET XXV

WINGED HOURS

EACH hour until we meet is as a bird
 That wings from far his gradual way along
 The rustling covert of my soul,—his song
 Still loudlier trilled through leaves more deeply stirr'd :
 But at the hour of meeting, a clear word
 Is every note he sings, in Love's own tongue ;
 Yet, Love, thou know'st the sweet strain suffers wrong
 Full oft through our contending joys unheard.

What of that hour at last, when for her sake
 No wing may fly to me nor song may flow ;
 When, wandering round my life unleaved, I know
 The bloodied feathers scattered in the brake,
 And think how she, far from me, with like eyes
 Sees through the untuneful bough the wingless skies ?

SONNET XXVI

MID-RAPTURE

THOU lovely and beloved, thou my love ;
 Whose kiss seems still the first ; whose summoning eyes,
 Even now, as for our love-world's new sunrise,
 Shed very dawn ; whose voice, attuned above
 All modulation of the deep-bowered dove,
 Is like a hand laid softly on the soul ;
 Whose hand is like a sweet voice to control
 Those worn tired brows it hath the keeping of :—

What word can answer to thy word,—what gaze
 To thine, which now absorbs within its sphere
 My worshipping face, till I am mirrored there
 Light-circled in a heaven of deep-drawn rays ?
 What clasp, what kiss mine inmost heart can prove,
 O lovely and beloved, O my love ?

SONNET XXVII

HEART'S COMPASS

SOMETIMES thou seem'st not as thyself alone,
 But as the meaning of all things that are ;
 A breathless wonder, shadowing forth afar
 Some heavenly solstice hushed and halcyon ;
 Whose unstirred lips are music's visible tone ;
 Whose eyes the sun-gate of the soul unbar,
 Being of its furthest fires oracular ;—
 The evident heart of all life sown and mown.

Even such Love is ; and is not thy name Love ?
 Yea, by thy hand the Love-god rends apart
 All gathering clouds of Night's ambiguous art ;
 Flings them far down, and sets thine eyes above ;
 And simply, as some gage of flower or glove,
 Stakes with a smile the world against thy heart.

SONNET XXVIII

SOUL-LIGHT

WHAT other woman could be loved like you,
 Or how of you should love possess his fill?
 After the fulness of all rapture, still,—
 As at the end of some deep avenue
 A tender glamour of day,—there comes to view
 Far in your eyes a yet more hungering thrill,—
 Such fire as Love's soul-winnowing hands distil
 Even from his inmost ark of light and dew.

And as the traveller triumphs with the sun,
 Glorifying in heat's mid-height, yet startide brings
 Wonder new-born, and still fresh transport springs
 From limpid lambent hours of day begun;—
 Even so, through eyes and voice, your soul doth move
 My soul with changeful light of infinite love.

SONNET XXIX

THE MOONSTAR

LADY, I thank thee for thy loveliness,
 Because my lady is more lovely still.
 Glorifying I gaze, and yield with glad goodwill
 To thee thy tribute; by whose sweet-spun dress
 Of delicate life Love labours to assess
 My lady's absolute queendom; saying, "Lo!
 How high this beauty is, which yet doth show
 But as that beauty's sovereign votaress."

Lady, I saw thee with her, side by side;
 And as, when night's fair fires their queen surround,
 An emulous star too near the moon will ride,—
 Even so thy rays within her luminous bound
 Were traced no more; and by the light so drown'd,
 Lady, not thou but she was glorified.

SONNET XXX

LAST FIRE

LOVE, through your spirit and mine what summer eve
 Now glows with glory of all things possess'd,
 Since this day's sun of rapture filled the west
 And the light sweetened as the fire took leave?
 Awhile now softlier let your bosom heave,
 As in Love's harbour, even that loving breast,
 All care takes refuge while we sink to rest,
 And mutual dreams the bygone bliss retrieve.

Many the days that Winter keeps in store,
 Sunless throughout, or whose brief sun-glimpses
 Scarce shed the heaped snow through the naked trees,
 This day at least was Summer's paramour,
 Sun-coloured to the imperishable core
 With sweet well-being of love and full heart's ease.

SONNET XXXI

HER GIFTS

High grace, the dower of queens; and therewithal
 Some wood-born wonder's sweet simplicity;
 A glance like water brimming with the sky
 Or hyacinth-light where forest-shadows fall;
 Such thrilling pallor of cheek as doth enthrall
 The heart; a mouth whose passionate forms imply
 All music and all silence held thereby;
 Deep golden locks, her sovereign coronal;
 A round reared neck, meet column of Love's shrine
 To cling to when the heart takes sanctuary;
 Hands which for ever at Love's bidding be,
 And soft-stirred feet still answering to his sign:—
 These are her gifts, as tongue may tell them o'er.
 Breathe low her name, my soul; for that means more.

SONNET XXXII

EQUAL TROTH

Not by one measure mayst thou mete our love;
 For how should I be loved as I love thee?—
 I, graceless, joyless, lacking absolutely
 All gifts that with thy queenship best behove;—
 Thou, throned in every heart's elect alcove,
 And crowned with garlands culled from every tree,
 Which for no head but thine, by Love's decree,
 All beauties and all mysteries interweave.
 But here thine eyes and lips yield soft rebuke:—
 "Then only" (say'st thou) "could I love thee less,
 When thou couldst doubt my love's equality."
 Peace, sweet! If not to sum but worth we look,—
 Thy heart's transcendence, not my heart's excess,—
 Then more a thousandfold thou lov'st than I.

SONNET XXXIII

VENUS VICTRIX

COULD Juno's self more sovereign presence wear
 Than thou, 'mid other ladies throned in grace?—
 Or Pallas, when thou bend'st with soul-stilled face
 O'er poet's page gold-shadowed in thy hair?
 Dost thou than Venus seem less heavenly fair
 When o'er the sea of love's tumultuous trance
 Hovers thy smile, and mingles with thy glance
 That sweet voice like the last wave murmuring there?

Before such triune loveliness divine
 Awestruck I ask, which goddess here most claims
 The prize that, howsoe'er adjudged, is thine?
 Then Love breathes low the sweetest of thy names;
 And Venus Victrix to my heart doth bring
 Herself, the Helen of her guerdoning.

PRINCIPAL POEMS

SONNET XXXIV

THE DARK GLASS

Nor I myself know all my love for thee :
 How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh
 To-morrow's dower by gage of yesterday ?
 Shall birth and death, and all dark names that be
 As doors and windows bared to some loud sea,
 Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with spray ;
 And shall my sense pierce love,—the last relay
 And ultimate outpost of eternity ?

Lo ! what am I to Love, the lord of all ?
 One murmuring shell he gathers from the sand,—
 One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.
 Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearest call
 And veriest touch of powers primordial
 That any hour-girt life may understand.

SONNET XXXV

THE LAMP'S SHRINE

SOMETIMES I fain would find in thee some fault,
 That I might love thee still in spite of it :
 Yet how should our Lord Love curtail one whit
 Thy perfect praise whom most he would exalt ?
 Alas ! he can but make my heart's low vault
 Even in men's sight unworthier, being lit
 By thee, who thereby show'st more exquisite
 Like fiery chrysoprase in deep basalt.

Yet will I nowise shrink ; but at Love's shrine
 Myself within the beams his brow doth dart
 Will set the flashing jewel of thy heart
 In that dull chamber where it deigns to shine :
 For lo ! in honour of thine excellencies
 My heart takes pride to show how poor it is.

SONNET XXXVI

LIFE-IN-LOVE

Nor in thy body is thy life at all,
 But in this lady's lips and hands and eyes ;
 Through these she yields thee life that vivifies
 What else were sorrow's servant and death's thrall.
 Look on thyself without her, and recall
 The waste remembrance and forlorn surmise
 That lived but in a dead-drawn breath of sighs
 O'er vanished hours and hours eventual.

Even so much life hath the poor tress of hair
 Which, stored apart, is all love hath to show
 For heart-beats and for fire-heats long ago ;
 Even so much life endures unknown, even where,
 'Mid change the changeless night environeth,
 Lies all that golden hair undimmed in death.

SONNET XXXVII

THE LOVE-MOON

"WHEN that dead face, bowered in the furthest years,
Which once was all the life years held for thee,
Can now scarce bid the tides of memory
Cast on thy soul a little spray of tears,—
How canst thou gaze into these eyes of hers
Whom now thy heart delights in, and not see
Within each orb Love's philtred euphrasy
Make them of buried troth remembrancers?"

"Nay, pitiful Love, nay, loving Pity! Well
Thou knowest that in these twain I have confess'd
Two very voices of thy summoning bell.
Nay, Master, shall not Death make manifest
In these the culminant changes which approve
The love-moon that must light my soul to Love?"

SONNET XXXVIII

THE MORROW'S MESSAGE

"THOU Ghost," I said, "and is thy name To-day?—
Yesterday's son, with such an abject brow!—
And can To-morrow be more pale than thou?"
While yet I spoke, the silence answered: "Yea,
Henceforth our issue is all grieved and grey,
And each beforehand makes such poor avow
As of old leaves beneath the budding bough
Or night-drift that the sundawn shreds away."

Then cried I: "Mother of many malisons,
O Earth, receive me to thy dusty bed!"
But therewithal the tremulous silence said:
"Lo! Love yet bids thy lady greet thee once:—
Yea, twice,—whereby thy life is still the sun's;
And thrice,—whereby the shadow of death is dead."

SONNET XXXIX

SLEEPLESS DREAMS

GIRT in dark growths, yet glimmering with one star,
O night desirous as the nights of youth!
Why should my heart within thy spell, forsooth,
Now beat, as the bride's finger-pulses are
Quickened within the girdling golden bar?
What wings are these that fan my pillow smooth?
And why does Sleep, waved back by Joy and Ruth,
Tread softly round and gaze at me from far?

Nay, night deep-leaved! And would Love feign in thee
Some shadowy palpitating grove that bears
Rest for man's eyes and music for his ears?
O lonely night! art thou not known to me,
A thicket hung with masks of mockery
And watered with the wasteful warmth of tears?

SONNET XL

SEVERED SELVES

Two separate divided silences,
 Which, brought together, would find loving voice ;
 Two glances which together would rejoice
 In love, now lost like stars beyond dark trees ;
 Two hands apart whose touch alone gives ease ;
 Two bosoms which, heart-shrined with mutual flame,
 Would, meeting in one clasp, be made the same ;
 Two souls, the shores wave-mocked of sundering seas :—

Such are we now. Ah ! may our hope forecast
 Indeed one hour again, when on this stream
 Of darkened love once more the light shall gleam ?—
 An hour how slow to come, how quickly past,—
 Which blooms and fades, and only leaves at last,
 Faint as shed flowers, the attenuated dream.

SONNET XLI

THROUGH DEATH TO LOVE

LIKE labour-laden moonclouds faint to flee
 From winds that sweep the winter-bitten wold,—
 Like multiform circumfluence manifold
 Of night's flood-tide,—like terrors that agree
 Of hoarse-tongued fire and inarticulate sea,—
 Even such, within some glass dimmed by our breath,
 Our hearts discern wild images of Death,
 Shadows and shoals that edge eternity.

Howbeit athwart Death's imminent shade doth soar
 One Power, than flow of stream or flight of dove
 Sweeter to glide around, to brood above.
 Tell me, my heart,—what angel-greeted door
 Or threshold of wing-winnowed threshing-floor
 Hath guest fire-fledged as thine, whose lord is Love ?

SONNET XLII

HOPE OVERTAKEN

I DEEMED thy garments, O my Hope, were grey,
 So far I viewed thee. Now the space between
 Is passed at length ; and garmented in green
 Even as in days of yore thou stand'st to-day.
 Ah God ! and but for lingering dull dismay,
 On all that road our footsteps erst had been
 Even thus commingled, and our shadows seen
 Blent on the hedgerows and the water-way.

O Hope of mine whose eyes are living love,
 No eyes but hers,—O Love and Hope the same !—
 Lean close to me, for now the sinking sun
 That warmed our feet scarce gilds our hair above.
 O hers thy voice and very hers thy name !
 Alas, cling round me, for the day is done !

SONNET XLIII

LOVE AND HOPE

BLESS love and hope. Full many a withered year
 Whirled past us, eddying to its chill doomsday;
 And clasped together where the blown leaves lay
 We long have knelt and wept full many a tear.
 Yet lo! one hour at last, the Spring's compeer,
 Flutes softly to us from some green byeway:
 Those years, those tears are dead, but only they:—
 Bless love and hope, true soul; for we are here.

Cling heart to heart; nor of this hour demand
 Whether in very truth, when we are dead,
 Our hearts shall wake to know Love's golden head
 Sole sunshine of the imperishable land;
 Or but discern, through night's unfeatured scope,
 Scorn-fired at length the illusive eyes of Hope.

SONNET XLIV

CLOUD AND WIND

LOVE, should I fear death most for you or me?
 Yet if you die, can I not follow you,
 Forcing the straits of change? Alas! but who
 Shall wrest a bond from night's inveteracy,
 Ere yet my hazardous soul put forth, to be
 Her warrant against all her haste might rue?—
 Ah! in your eyes so reached what dumb adieu,
 What unsunned gyres of waste eternity?

And if I die the first, shall death be then
 A lampless watchtower whence I see you weep?—
 Or (woe is me!) a bed wherein my sleep
 Ne'er notes (as death's dear cup at last you drain),
 The hour when you too learn that all is vain
 And that Hope sows what Love shall never reap?

SONNET XLV

SECRET PARTING

BECAUSE our talk was of the cloud-control
 And moon-track of the journeying face of Fate,
 Her tremulous kisses faltered at love's gate
 And her eyes dreamed against a distant goal:
 But soon, remembering her how brief the whole
 Of joy, which its own hours annihilate,
 Her set gaze gathered, thirstier than of late,
 And as she kissed, her mouth became her soul.

Thence in what ways we wandered, and how strove
 To build with fire-tried vows the piteous home
 Which memory haunts and whither sleep may roam,—
 They only know for whom the roof of Love
 Is the still-seated secret of the grove,
 Nor spire may rise nor bell be heard therefrom.

SONNET XLVI

PARTED LOVE

WHAT shall be said of this embattled day
 And armèd occupation of this night
 By all thy foes beleaguered,—now when sight
 Nor sound denotes the loved one far away?
 Of these thy vanquished hours what shalt thou say,—
 As every sense to which she dealt delight
 Now labours lonely o'er the stark noon-height
 To reach the sunset's desolate disarray?

Stand still, fond fettered wretch! while Memory's art
 Parades the Past before thy face, and lures
 Thy spirit to her passionate portraitures:
 Till the tempestuous tide-gates flung apart
 Flood with wild will the hollows of thy heart,
 And thy heart rends thee, and thy body endures.

SONNET XLVII

BROKEN MUSIC

THE mother will not turn, who thinks she hears
 Her nursling's speech first grow articulate;
 But breathless with averted eyes elate
 She sits, with open lips and open ears,
 That it may call her twice. 'Mid doubts and fears
 Thus oft my soul has hearkened; till the song,
 A central moan for days, at length found tongue,
 And the sweet music welled and the sweet tears.

But now, whatever while the soul is fain
 To list that wonted murmur, as it were
 The speech-bound sea-shell's low importunate strain,—
 No breath of song, thy voice alone is there,
 O bitterly beloved! and all her gain
 Is but the pang of unpermitted prayer.

SONNET XLVIII

DEATH-IN-LOVE

THERE came an image in Life's retinue
 That had Love's wings and bore his gonfalon:
 Fair was the web, and nobly wrought thereon,
 O soul-sequestered face, thy form and hue!
 Bewildering sounds, such as Spring wakens to,
 Shook in its folds; and through my heart its power
 Sped trackless as the immemorable hour
 When birth's dark portal groaned and all was new.

But a veiled woman followed, and she caught
 The banner round its staff, to furl and cling,—
 Then plucked a feather from the bearer's wing
 And held it to his lips that stirred it not,
 And said to me, "Behold, there is no breath:
 I and this Love are one, and I am Death."

SONNETS XLIX, L, LI, LII

WILLOWWOOD

I

I SAT with Love upon a woodside well,
Leaning across the water, I and he ;
Nor ever did he speak nor looked at me,
But touched his lute wherein was audible
The certain secret thing he had to tell :
Only our mirrored eyes met silently
In the low wave ; and that sound came to be
The passionate voice I knew ; and my tears fell.

And at their fall, his eyes beneath grew hers ;
And with his foot and with his wing-feathers
He swept the spring that watered my heart's drouth.
Then the dark ripples spread to waving hair,
And as I stooped, her own lips rising there
Bubbled with brimming kisses at my mouth.

II

AND now Love sang : but his was such a song,
So meshed with half-remembrance hard to free,
As souls disused in death's sterility
May sing when the new birthday tarries long.
And I was made aware of a dumb throng
That stood aloof, one form by every tree,
All mournful forms, for each was I or she,
The shades of those our days that had no tongue.

They looked on us, and knew us and were known ;
While fast together, alive from the abyss,
Clung the soul-wrung implacable close kiss ;
And pity of self through all made broken moan
Which said " For once, for once, for once alone ! "
And still Love sang, and what he sang was this :—

III

" O YE, all ye that walk in Willowwood,
That walk with hollow faces burning white ;
What fathom-depth of soul-struck widowhood,
What long, what longer hours, one lifelong night,
Ere ye again, who so in vain have wooed
Your last hope lost, who so in vain invite
Your lips to that their unforgotten food,
Ere ye, ere ye again shall see the light !

Alas ! the bitter banks in Willowwood,
With tear-spurge wan, with blood-wort burning red :
Alas ! if ever such a pillow could
Steep deep the soul in sleep till she were dead,—
Better all life forget her than this thing,
That Willowwood should hold her wandering ! "

IV

So sang he : and as meeting rose and rose
 Together cling through the wind's wellaway
 Nor change at once, yet near the end of day
 The leaves drop loosened where the heart-stain glows,—
 So when the song died did the kiss uncloze ;
 And her face fell back drowned, and was as grey
 As its grey eyes ; and if it ever may
 Meet mine again I know not if Love knows.

Only I know that I leaned low and drank
 A long draught from the water where she sank,
 Her breath and all her tears and all her soul :
 And as I leaned, I know I felt Love's face
 Pressed on my neck with moan of pity and grace,
 Till both our heads were in his aureole.

SONNET LIH

WITHOUT HER

WHAT of her glass without her ? The blank grey
 There where the pool is blind of the moon's face.
 Her dress without her ? The tossed empty space
 Of cloud-rack whence the moon has passed away.
 Her paths without her ? Day's appointed sway
 Usurped by desolate night. Her pillowed place
 Without her ? Tears, ah me ! for love's good grace,
 And cold forgetfulness of night or day.

What of the heart without her ? Nay, poor heart,
 Of thee what word remains ere speech be still ?
 A wayfarer by barren ways and chill,
 Steep ways and weary, without her thou art,
 Where the long cloud, the long wood's counterpart,
 Sheds doubled darkness up the labouring hill.

SONNET LIV

LOVE'S FATALITY

SWEET Love,—but oh ! most dread Desire of Love
 Life-thwarted. Linked in gyves I saw them stand,
 Love shackled with Vain-longing, hand to hand :
 And one was eyed as the blue vault above :
 But hope tempestuous like a fire-cloud hove
 I' the other's gaze, even as in his whose wand
 Vainly all night with spell-wrought power has spann'd
 The unyielding caves of some deep treasure-trove.

Also his lips, two writhen flakes of flame,
 Made moan : " Alas O Love, thus leashed with me !
 Wing-footed thou, wing-shouldered, once born free :
 And I, thy cowering self, in chains grown tame,—
 Bound to thy body and soul, named with thy name,—
 Life's iron heart, even Love's Fatality."

SONNET LV

STILLBORN LOVE

THE hour which might have been yet might not be,
 Which man's and woman's heart conceived and bore
 Yet whereof life was barren,—on what shore
 Bides it the breaking of Time's weary sea?
 Bondchild of all consummate joys set free,
 It somewhere sighs and serves, and mute before
 The house of Love, hears through the echoing door
 His hours elect in choral consonancy.

But lo! what wedded souls now hand in hand
 Together tread at last the immortal strand
 With eyes where burning memory lights love home?
 Lo! how the little outcast hour has turned
 And leaped to them and in their faces yearned:—
 "I am your child: O parents, ye have come!"

SONNETS LVI, LVII, LVIII

TRUE WOMAN

I. HERSELF

To be a sweetness more desired than Spring;
 A bodily beauty more acceptable
 Than the wild rose-tree's arch that crowns the fell;
 To be an essence more environing
 Than wine's drained juice; a music ravishing
 More than the passionate pulse of Philomel;—
 To be all this 'neath one soft bosom's swell
 That is the flower of life:—how strange a thing!

How strange a thing to be what Man can know
 But as a sacred secret! Heaven's own screen
 Hides her soul's purest depth and loveliest glow;
 Closely withheld, as all things most unseen,—
 The wave-bowered pearl,—the heart-shaped seal of green
 That flecks the snowdrop underneath the snow.

II. HER LOVE

SHE loves him; for her infinite soul is Love,
 And he her lodestar. Passion in her is
 A glass facing his fire, where the bright bliss
 Is mirrored, and the heat returned. Yet move
 That glass, a stranger's amorous flame to prove,
 And it shall turn, by instant contraries,
 Ice to the moon; while her pure fire to his
 For whom it burns, clings close i' the heart's alcove.

Lo! they are one. With wifely breast to breast
 And circling arms, she welcomes all command
 Of love,—her soul to answering ardours fann'd:
 Yet as morn springs or twilight sinks to rest,
 Ah! who shall say she deems not loveliest
 The hour of sisterly sweet hand-in-hand?

III. HER HEAVEN

IF to grow old in Heaven is to grow young,
 (As the Seer saw and said,) then blest were he
 With youth for evermore, whose heaven should be
 True Woman, she whom these weak notes have sung.
 Here and hereafter,—choir-strains of her tongue,—
 Sky-spaces of her eyes,—sweet signs that flee
 About her soul's immediate sanctuary,—
 Were Paradise all uttermost worlds among.

The sunrise blooms and withers on the hill
 Like any hillflower; and the noblest troth
 Dies here to dust. Yet shall Heaven's promise clothe
 Even yet those lovers who have cherished still
 This test for love:—in every kiss sealed fast
 To feel the first kiss and forebode the last.

SONNET LIX

LOVE'S LAST GIFT

LOVE to his singer held a glistening leaf,
 And said: "The rose-tree and the apple-tree
 Have fruits to vaunt or flowers to lure the bee;
 And golden shafts are in the feathered sheaf
 Of the great harvest-marshal, the year's chief,
 Victorious Summer; aye, and 'neath warm sea
 Strange secret grasses lurk inviolably
 Between the filtering channels of sunk reef.

"All are my blooms; and all sweet blooms of love
 To thee I gave while Spring and Summer sang;
 But Autumn stops to listen, with some pang
 From those worse things the wind is moaning of.
 Only this laurel dreads no winter days:
 Take my last gift; thy heart hath sung my praise."

PART II.—CHANGE AND FATE

SONNET LX

TRANSFIGURED LIFE

As growth of form or momentary glance
 In a child's features will recall to mind
 The father's with the mother's face combin'd,—
 Sweet interchange that memories still enhance:
 And yet, as childhood's years and youth's advance,
 The gradual mouldings leave one stamp behind,
 Till in the blended likeness now we find
 A separate man's or woman's countenance:—

So in the Song, the singer's Joy and Pain,
 Its very parents, evermore expand
 To bid the passion's fullgrown birth remain,
 By Art's transfiguring essence subtly spann'd;
 And from that song-cloud shaped as a man's hand
 There comes the sound as of abundant rain.

SONNET LXI

THE SONG-THROE

By thine own tears thy song must tears beget,
 O Singer! Magic mirror thou hast none
 Except thy manifest heart; and save thine own
 Anguish or ardour, else no amulet.
 Cisterned in Pride, verse is the feathery jet
 Of soulless air-flung fountains; nay, more dry
 Than the Dead Sea for throats that thirst and sigh,
 That song o'er which no singer's lids grew wet.

The Song-god—He the Sun-god—is no slave
 Of thine: thy Hunter he, who for thy soul
 Fledges his shaft: to no august control
 Of thy skilled hand his quivered store he gave:
 But if thy lips' loud cry leap to his smart,
 The inspir'd recoil shall pierce thy brother's heart.

SONNET LXII

THE SOUL'S SPHERE

SOME prisoned moon in steep cloud-fastnesses,—
 Throned queen and thrall'd; some dying sun whose pyre
 Blazed with momentous memorable fire;—
 Who hath not yearned and fed his heart with these?
 Who, sleepless, hath not anguished to appease
 Tragical shadow's realm of sound and sight
 Conjectured in the lamentable night? . . .
 Lo! the soul's sphere of infinite images!

What sense shall count them? Whether it forecast
 The rose-winged hours that flutter in the van
 Of Love's unquestioning unrevealed span,—
 Visions of golden futures: or that last
 Wild pageant of the accumulated past
 That clangs and flashes for a drowning man.

SONNET LXIII

INCLUSIVENESS

THE changing guests, each in a different mood,
 Sit at the roadside table and arise:
 And every life among them in like wise
 Is a soul's board set daily with new food.
 What man has bent o'er his son's sleep, to brood
 How that face shall watch his when cold it lies?—
 Or thought, as his own mother kissed his eyes,
 Of what her kiss was when his father wooed?

May not this ancient room thou sitt'st in dwell
 In separate living souls for joy or pain?
 Nay, all its corners may be painted plain
 Where Heaven shows pictures of some life spent well;
 And may be stamped, a memory all in vain,
 Upon the sight of lidless eyes in Hell.

SONNET LXIV

ARDOUR AND MEMORY

THE cuckoo-throb, the heartbeat of the Spring ;
 The rosebud's blush that leaves it as it grows
 Into the full-eyed fair unblushing rose ;
 The summer clouds that visit every wing
 With fires of sunrise and of sunseting ;
 The furtive flickering streams to light re-born
 'Mid airs new-fledged and valorous lusts of morn,
 While all the daughters of the daybreak sing :—

These ardour loves, and memory : and when flown
 All joys, and through dark forest-boughs in flight
 The wind swoops onward brandishing the light,
 Even yet the rose-tree's verdure left alone
 Will flush all ruddy though the rose be gone ;
 With ditties and with dirges infinite.

SONNET LXV

KNOWN IN VAIN

As two whose love, first foolish, widening scope,
 Knows suddenly, to music high and soft,
 The Holy of holies ; who because they scoff'd
 Are now amazed with shame, nor dare to cope
 With the whole truth aloud, lest heaven should ope ;
 Yet, at their meetings, laugh not as they laugh'd
 In speech ; nor speak, at length ; but sitting oft
 Together, within hopeless sight of hope
 For hours are silent :—So it happeneth
 When Work and Will awake too late, to gaze
 After their life sailed by, and hold their breath.
 Ah ! who shall dare to search through what sad maze
 Thenceforth their incommunicable ways
 Follow the desultory feet of Death ?

SONNET LXVI

THE HEART OF THE NIGHT

FROM child to youth ; from youth to arduous man ;
 From lethargy to fever of the heart ;
 From faithful life to dream-dowered days apart ;
 From trust to doubt ; from doubt to brink of ban ;—
 Thus much of change in one swift cycle ran
 Till now. Alas, the soul !—how soon must she
 Accept her primal immortality,—
 The flesh resume its dust whence it began ?

O Lord of work and peace ! O Lord of life !
 O Lord, the awful Lord of will ! though late,
 Even yet renew this soul with duteous breath :
 That when the peace is garnered in from strife,
 The work retrieved, the will regenerate,
 This soul may see thy face, O Lord of death !

SONNET LXVII

THE LANDMARK

WAS *that* the landmark? What,—the foolish well
 Whose wave, low down, I did not stoop to drink,
 But sat and flung the pebbles from its brink
 In sport to send its imaged skies pell-mell,
 (And mine own image, had I noted well!)—
 Was that my point of turning?—I had thought
 The stations of my course should rise unsought,
 As altar-stone or ensigned citadel.

But lo! the path is missed, I must go back,
 And thirst to drink when next I reach the spring
 Which once I stained, which since may have grown black.
 Yet though no light be left nor bird now sing
 As here I turn, I'll thank God, hastening,
 That the same goal is still on the same track.

SONNET LXVIII

A DARK DAY

THE gloom that breathes upon me with these airs
 Is like the drops which strike the traveller's brow
 Who knows not, darkling, if they bring him now
 Fresh storm, or be old rain the covert bears.
 Ah! bodes this hour some harvest of new tares,
 Or hath but memory of the day whose plough
 Sowed hunger once,—the night at length when thou,
 O prayer found vain, didst fall from out my prayers?

How prickly were the growths which yet how smooth,
 Along the hedgerows of this journey shed,
 Lie by Time's grace till night and sleep may soothe!
 Even as the thistledown from pathsides dead
 Gleaned by a girl in autumns of her youth,
 Which one new year makes soft her marriage-bed.

SONNET LXIX

AUTUMN IDLENESS

THIS sunlight shames November where he grieves
 In dead red leaves, and will not let him shun
 The day, though bough with bough be over-run.
 But with a blessing every glade receives
 High salutation; while from hillock-eaves
 The deer gaze calling, dappled white and dun,
 As if, being foresters of old, the sun
 Had marked them with the shade of forest-leaves.

Here dawn to-day unveiled her magic glass;
 Here noon now gives the thirst and takes the dew;
 Till eve bring rest when other good things pass.
 And here the lost hours the lost hours renew
 While I still lead my shadow o'er the grass,
 Nor know, for longing, that which I should do.

SONNET LXX

THE HILL SUMMIT

THIS feast-day of the sun, his altar there
 In the broad west has blazed for vesper-song ;
 And I have loitered in the vale too long
 And gaze now a belated worshipper.
 Yet may I not forget that I was 'ware,
 So journeying, of his face at intervals
 Transfigured where the fringed horizon falls,—
 A fiery bush with coruscating hair.

And now that I have climbed and won this height,
 I must tread downward through the sloping shade
 And travel the bewildered tracks till night.
 Yet for this hour I still may here be stayed
 And see the gold air and the silver fade
 And the last bird fly into the last light.

SONNETS LXXI, LXXII, LXXIII

THE CHOICE

I

EAT thou and drink ; to-morrow thou shalt die.
 Surely the earth, that's wise being very old,
 Needs not our help. Then loose me, love, and hold
 Thy sultry hair up from my face ; that I
 May pour for thee this golden wine, brim-high,
 Till round the glass thy fingers glow like gold.
 We'll drown all hours : thy song, while hours are toll'd,
 Shall leap, as fountains veil the changing sky.

Now kiss, and think that there are really those,
 My own high-bosomed beauty, who increase
 Vain gold, vain lore, and yet might choose our way !
 Through many years they toil ; then on a day
 They die not,—for their life was death,—but cease ;
 And round their narrow lips the mould falls close.

II

WATCH thou and fear ; to-morrow thou shalt die.
 Or art thou sure thou shalt have time for death ?
 Is not the day which God's word promiseth
 To come man knows not when ? In yonder sky,
 Now while we speak, the sun speeds forth : can I
 Or thou assure him of his goal ? God's breath
 Even at this moment haply quickeneth
 The air to a flame ; till spirits, always nigh
 Though screened and hid, shall walk the daylight here.
 And dost thou prate of all that man shall do ?
 Canst thou, who hast but plagues, presume to be
 Glad in his gladness that comes after thee ?
 Will *his* strength slay *thy* worm in Hell ? Go to :
 Cover thy countenance, and watch, and fear.

III

THINK thou and act ; to-morrow thou shalt die.

Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,

Thou say'st : " Man's measured path is all gone o'er :
Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
Man clomb until he touched the truth ; and I,

Even I, am he whom it was destined for."

How should this be ? Art thou then so much more
Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap thereby ?

Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound

Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me ;

Then reach on with thy thought till it be drown'd.

Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

SONNETS LXXIV, LXXV, LXXVI

OLD AND NEW ART

I. ST. LUKE THE PAINTER

GIVE honour unto Luke Evangelist ;

For he it was (the aged legends say)

Who first taught Art to fold her hands and pray.

Scarcely at once she dared to rend the mist

Of devious symbols : but soon having wist

How sky-breadth and field-silence and this day

Are symbols also in some deeper way,

She looked through these to God and was God's priest.

And if, past noon, her toil began to irk,

And she sought talismans, and turned in vain

To soulless self-reflections of man's skill,—

Yet now, in this the twilight, she might still

Kneel in the latter grass to pray again,

Ere the night cometh and she may not work.

II. NOT AS THESE

" I AM not as these are," the poet saith

In youth's pride, and the painter, among men

At bay, where never pencil comes nor pen,

And shut about with his own frozen breath.

To others for whom only rhyme wins faith

As poets,—only paint as painters,—then

He turns in the cold silence ; and again

Shrinking, " I am not as these are," he saith.

And say that this is so, what follows it ?

For were thine eyes set backwards in thine head,

Such words were well ; but they see on, and far.

Unto the lights of the great Past, new-lit

Fair for the Future's track, look thou instead,—

Say thou instead, " I am not as *these* are."

PRINCIPAL POEMS

III. THE HUSBANDMEN

THOUGH God, as one that is an householder,
 Called these to labour in His vineyard first,
 Before the husk of darkness was well burst
 Bidding them grope their way out and bestir,
 (Who, questioned of their wages, answered, "Sir,
 Unto each man a penny :") though the worst
 Burthen of heat was theirs and the dry thirst :
 Though God has since found none such as these were
 To do their work like them :—Because of this
 Stand not ye idle in the market-place.
 Which of ye knoweth *he* is not that last
 Who may be first by faith and will ?—yea, his
 The hand which after the appointed days
 And hours shall give a Future to their Past ?

SONNET LXXVII

SOUL'S BEAUTY

UNDER the arch of Life, where love and death,
 Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
 Beauty enthroned ; and though her gaze struck awe,
 I drew it in as simply as my breath.
 Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
 The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can draw,
 By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
 The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
 Thy voice and hand shake still,—long known to thee
 By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat
 Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
 How passionately and irretrievably,
 In what fond flight, how many ways and days !

SONNET LXXVIII

BODY'S BEAUTY

OF Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told
 (The witch he loved before the gift of Eve,)
 That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
 And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
 And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
 And, subtly of herself contemplative,
 Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
 Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers ; for where
 Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
 And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare ?
 Lo ! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
 Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
 And round his heart one strangling golden hair.

SONNET LXXIX

THE MONOCHORD

Is it this sky's vast vault or ocean's sound
 That is Life's self and draws my life from me,
 And by instinct ineffable decree
 Holds my breath quailing on the bitter bound?
 Nay, is it Life or Death, thus thunder-crown'd,
 That 'mid the tide of all emergency
 Now notes my separate wave, and to what sea
 Its difficult eddies labour in the ground?

Oh! what is this that knows the road I came,
 The flame turned cloud, the cloud returned to flame,
 The lifted shifted steepes and all the way?—
 That draws round me at last this wind-warm space,
 And in regenerate rapture turns my face
 Upon the devious coverts of dismay?

SONNET LXXX

FROM DAWN TO NOON

As the child knows not if his mother's face
 Be fair; nor of his elders yet can deem
 What each most is; but as of hill or stream
 At dawn, all glimmering life surrounds his place:
 Who yet, tow'rd noon of his half-weary race,
 Pausing awhile beneath the high sun-beam
 And gazing steadily back,—as through a dream,
 In things long past new features now can trace:—

Even so the thought that is at length fullgrown
 Turns back to note the sun-smit paths, all grey
 And marvellous once, where first it walked alone;
 And haply doubts, amid the unblenching day,
 Which most or least impelled its onward way,—
 Those unknown things or these things overknown.

SONNET LXXXI

MEMORIAL THRESHOLDS

WHAT place so strange,—though unrevealed snow
 With unimaginable fires arise
 At the earth's end,—what passion of surprise
 Like frost-bound fire-girt scenes of long ago?
 Lo! this is none but I this hour; and lo!
 This is the very place which to mine eyes
 Those mortal hours in vain immortalize,
 'Mid hurrying crowds, with what alone I know.

City, of thine a single simple door,
 By some new Power reduplicate, must be
 Even yet my life-porch in eternity,
 Even with one presence filled, as once of yore:
 Or mocking winds whirl round a chaff-strown floor
 Thee and thy years and these my words and me.

PRINCIPAL POEMS

SONNET LXXXII

HOARDED JOY

I SAID: "Nay, pluck not,—let the first fruit be:
 Even as thou sayest, it is sweet and red,
 But let it ripen still. The tree's bent head
 Sees in the stream its own fecundity
 And bides the day of fulness. Shall not we
 At the sun's hour that day possess the shade,
 And claim our fruit before its ripeness fade,
 And eat it from the branch and praise the tree?"

I say: "Alas! our fruit hath wooed the sun
 Too long,—'tis fallen and floats adown the stream.
 Lo, the last clusters! Pluck them every one,
 And let us sup with summer; ere the gleam
 Of autumn set the year's pent sorrow free,
 And the woods wail like echoes from the sea."

SONNET LXXXIII

BARREN SPRING

ONCE more the changed year's turning wheel returns:
 And as a girl sails balanced in the wind,
 And now before and now again behind
 Stoops as it swoops, with cheek that laughs and burns,—
 So Spring comes merry towards me here, but earns
 No answering smile from me, whose life is twin'd
 With the dead boughs that winter still must bind,
 And whom to-day the Spring no more concerns.

Behold, this crocus is a withering flame;
 This snowdrop, snow; this apple-blossom's part
 To breed the fruit that breeds the serpent's art.
 Nay, for these Spring-flowers, turn thy face from them,
 Nor stay till on the year's last lily-stem
 The white cup shrivels round the golden heart.

SONNET LXXXIV

FAREWELL TO THE GLEN

SWEET stream-fed glen, why say "farewell" to thee
 Who far'st so well and find'st for ever smooth
 The brow of Time where man may read no ruth?
 Nay, do thou rather say "farewell" to me,
 Who now fare forth in bitterer fantasy
 Than erst was mine where other shade might soothe
 By other streams, what while in fragrant youth
 The bliss of being sad made melancholy.

And yet, farewell! For better shalt thou fare
 When children bathe sweet faces in thy flow
 And happy lovers blend sweet shadows there
 In hours to come, than when an hour ago
 Thine echoes had but one man's sighs to bear
 And thy trees whispered what he feared to know.

SONNET LXXXV

VAIN VIRTUES

WHAT is the sorriest thing that enters Hell?
 None of the sins,—but this and that fair deed
 Which a soul's sin at length could supersede.
 These yet are virgins, whom death's timely knell
 Might once have sainted; whom the fiends compel
 Together now, in snake-bound shuddering sheaves
 Of anguish, while the pit's pollution leaves
 Their refuse maidenhood abominable.

Night sucks them down, the tribute of the pit,
 Whose names, half entered in the book of Life,
 Were God's desire at noon. And as their hair
 And eyes sink last, the Torturer deigns no whit
 To gaze, but, yearning, waits his destined wife,
 The Sin still blithe on earth that sent them there.

SONNET LXXXVI

LOST DAYS

THE lost days of my life until to-day,
 What were they, could I see them on the street
 Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
 Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
 Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
 Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
 Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
 The undying throats of Hell, athirst away?

I do not see them here; but after death
 God knows I know the faces I shall see,
 Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
 "I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?"
 "And I—and I—thyself," (lo! each one saith,)
 "And thou thyself to all eternity!"

SONNET LXXXVII

DEATH'S SONGSTERS

WHEN first that horse, within whose populous womb
 The birth was death, o'ershadowed Troy with fate,
 Her elders, dubious of its Grecian freight,
 Brought Helen there to sing the songs of home;
 She whispered, "Friends, I am alone; come, come!"
 Then, crouched within, Ulysses waxed afraid,
 And on his comrades' quivering mouths he laid
 His hands, and held them till the voice was dumb.

The same was he who, lashed to his own mast,
 There where the sea-flowers screen the charnel-caves,
 Beside the sirens' singing island pass'd,
 Till sweetness failed along the inveterate waves. . . .
 Say, soul,—are songs of Death no heaven to thee,
 Nor shames her lip the cheek of Victory?

PRINCIPAL POEMS

SONNET LXXXVIII

HERO'S LAMP.*

THAT lamp thou fill'st in Eros' name to-night,
 O Hero, shall the Sestian augurs take
 To-morrow, and for drowned Leander's sake
 To Anteros its fireless lip shall plight.
 Aye, waft the unspoken vow: yet dawn's first light
 On ebbing storm and life twice ebb'd must break;
 While 'neath no sunrise, by the Avernian Lake,
 Lo where Love walks, Death's pallid neophyte.

That lamp within Anteros' shadowy shrine
 Shall stand unlit (for so the gods decree)
 Till some one man the happy issue see
 Of a life's love, and bid its flame to shine:
 Which still may rest unfir'd; for, theirs or thine,
 O brother, what brought love to them or thee?

SONNET LXXXIX

THE TREES OF THE GARDEN

YE who have passed Death's haggard hills; and ye
 Whom trees that knew your sires shall cease to know
 And still stand silent:—is it all a show,—
 A wisp that laughs upon the wall?—decree
 Of some inexorable supremacy
 Which ever, as man strains his blind surmise
 From depth to ominous depth, looks past his eyes,
 Sphinx-faced with unabashed augury?

Nay, rather question the Earth's self. Invoke
 The storm-felled forest-trees moss-grown to-day
 Whose roots are hillocks where the children play;
 Or ask the silver sapling 'neath what yoke
 Those stars, his spray-crown's clustering gems, shall wage
 Their journey still when his boughs shrink with age.

SONNET XC

"RETRO ME, SATHANA!"

GET thee behind me. Even as, heavy-curved,
 Stooping against the wind, a charioteer
 Is snatched from out his chariot by the hair,
 So shall Time be; and as the void car, hurled
 Abroad by reinless steeds, even so the world:
 Yea, even as chariot-dust upon the air,
 It shall be sought and not found anywhere.
 Get thee behind me, Satan. Oft unfurled,
 Thy perilous wings can beat and break like lath
 Much mightiness of men to win thee praise.
 Leave these weak feet to tread in narrow ways.
 Thou still, upon the broad vine-sheltered path,
 Mayst wait the turning of the phials of wrath
 For certain years, for certain months and days.

* After the deaths of Leander and of Hero, the signal-lamp was dedicated to Anteros with the edict that no man should light it unless his love had proved fortunate.

SONNET XCI

LOST ON BOTH SIDES

As when two men have loved a woman well,
 Each hating each, through Love's and Death's deceit;
 Since not for either this stark marriage-sheet
 And the long pauses of this wedding-bell;
 Yet o'er her grave the night and day dispel
 At last their feud forlorn, with cold and heat;
 Nor other than dear friends to death may fleet
 The two lives left that most of her can tell:—

So separate hopes, which in a soul had wooed
 The one same Peace, strove with each other long,
 And Peace before their faces perished since:
 So through that soul, in restless brotherhood,
 They roam together now, and wind among
 Its bye-streets, knocking at the dusty inns.

SONNETS XCII, XCIII

THE SUN'S SHAME

I

BEHOLDING youth and hope in mockery caught
 From life; and mocking pulses that remain
 When the soul's death of bodily death is fain;
 Honour unknown, and honour known unsought;
 And penury's sedulous self-torturing thought
 On gold, whose master therewith buys his bane;
 And longed-for woman longing all in vain
 For lonely man with love's desire distraught;
 And wealth, and strength, and power, and pleasantness,
 Given unto bodies of whose souls men say,
 None poor and weak, slavish and foul, as they:—
 Beholding these things, I behold no less
 The blushing morn and blushing eve confess
 The shame that loads the intolerable day.

II

As some true chief of men, bowed down with stress
 Of life's disastrous eld, on blossoming youth
 May gaze, and murmur with self-pity and ruth,—
 "Might I thy fruitless treasure but possess,
 Such blessing of mine all coming years should bless;"—
 Then sends one sigh forth to the unknown goal,
 And bitterly feels breathe against his soul
 The hour swift-winged of nearer nothingness:—

Even so the World's grey Soul to the green World
 Perchance one hour must cry: "Woe's me, for whom
 Inveteracy of ill portends the doom,—
 Whose heart's old fire in shadow of shame is furl'd:
 While thou even as of yore art journeying,
 All soulless now, yet merry with the Spring!"

SONNET XCIV

MICHELANGELO'S KISS

GREAT Michelangelo, with age grown bleak
 And uttermost labours, having once o'ersaid
 All grievous memories on his long life shed,
 This worst regret to one true heart could speak :—
 That when, with sorrowing love and reverence meek,
 He stooped o'er sweet Colonna's dying bed,
 His Muse and dominant Lady, spirit-wed,—
 Her hand he kissed, but not her brow or cheek.

O Buonarruoti,—good at Art's fire-wheels
 To urge her chariot!—even thus the Soul,
 Touching at length some sorely-chastened goal,
 Earns oftenest but a little : her appeals
 Were deep and mute,—lowly her claim. Let be :
 What holds for her Death's garner? And for thee ?

SONNET XCV

THE VASE OF LIFE

AROUND the vase of Life at your slow pace
 He has not crept, but turned it with his hands,
 And all its sides already understands.
 There, girt, one breathes alert for some great race ;
 Whose road runs far by sands and fruitful space ;
 Who laughs, yet through the jolly throng has pass'd ;
 Who weeps, nor stays for weeping ; who at last,
 A youth, stands somewhere crowned, with silent face.

And he has filled this vase with wine for blood,
 With blood for tears, with spice for burning vow,
 With watered flowers for buried love most fit ;
 And would have cast it shattered to the flood,
 Yet in Fate's name has kept it whole ; which now
 Stands empty till his ashes fall in it,

SONNET XCVI

LIFE THE BELOVED

As thy friend's face, with shadow of soul o'erspread,
 Somewhile unto thy sight perchance hath been
 Ghastly and strange, yet never so is seen
 In thought, but to all fortunate favour wed ;
 As thy love's death-bound features never dead
 To memory's glass return, but contravene
 Frail fugitive days, and alway keep, I ween,
 Than all new life a livelier loveliness :—

So Life herself, thy spirit's friend and love,
 Even still as Spring's authentic harbinger
 Glows with fresh hours for hope to glorify ;
 Though pale she lay when in the winter grove
 Her funeral flowers were snow-flakes shed on her
 And the red wings of frost-fire rent the sky.

SONNET XCVII

A SUPERScription

Look in my face ; my name is Might-have-been ;
 I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell ;
 Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
 Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between ;
 Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
 Which had Life's form and Love's, but by my spell
 Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
 Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.

Mark me, how still I am ! But should there dart
 One moment through thy soul the soft surprise
 Of that winged Peace which lulls the breath of sighs.—
 Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
 Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart
 Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.

SONNET XCVIII

HE AND I

WHENCE came his feet into my field, and why ?
 How is it that he sees it all so drear ?
 How do I see his seeing, and how hear
 The name his bitter silence knows it by ?
 This was the little fold of separate sky
 Whose pasturing clouds in the soul's atmosphere
 Drew living light from one continual year :
 How should he find it lifeless ? He, or I ?

Lo ! this new Self now wanders round my field,
 With plaints for every flower, and for each tree
 A moan, the sighing wind's auxiliary :
 And o'er sweet waters of my life, that yield
 Unto his lips no draught but tears unseal'd,
 Even in my place he weeps. Even I, not he.

SONNETS XCIX, C

NEWBORN DEATH

I

TO-DAY Death seems to me an infant child
 Which her worn mother Life upon my knee
 Has set to grow my friend and play with me ;
 If haply so my heart might be beguil'd
 To find no terrors in a face so mild,—
 If haply so my weary heart might be
 Unto the newborn milky eyes of thee,
 O Death, before resentment reconcil'd.

How long, O Death ? And shall thy feet depart
 Still a young child's with mine, or wilt thou stand
 Fullgrown the helpful daughter of my heart,
 What time with thee indeed I reach the strand
 Of the pale wave which knows thee what thou art,
 And drink it in the hollow of thy hand ?

II

AND thou, O Life, the lady of all bliss,
 With whom, when our first heart beat full and fast,
 I wandered till the haunts of men were pass'd,
 And in fair places found all bowers amiss
 Till only woods and waves might hear our kiss,
 While to the winds all thought of Death we cast :—
 Ah, Life ! and must I have from thee at last
 No smile to greet me and no babe but this ?

Lo ! Love, the child once ours ; and Song, whose hair
 Blew like a flame and blossomed like a wreath ;
 And Art, whose eyes were worlds by God found fair :
 These o'er the book of Nature mixed their breath
 With neck-twined arms, as oft we watched them there :
 And did these die that thou mightst bear me Death ?

SONNET CI

THE ONE HOPE

WHEN vain desire at last and vain regret
 Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
 What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
 And teach the unforgetful to forget ?
 Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet,—
 Or may the soul at once in a green plain
 Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain
 And cull the dew-drenched flowering amulet ?

Ah ! when the wan soul in that golden air
 Between the scripted petals softly blown
 Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,—
 Ah ! let none other alien spell soe'er
 But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
 Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

EDEN BOWER

It was Lilith the wife of Adam :
 (*Sing Eden Bower !*)
 Not a drop of her blood was human,
 But she was made like a soft sweet woman.

Lilith stood on the skirts of Eden;
(Alas the hour !)
 She was the first that thence was driven ;
 With her was hell and with Eve was heaven.

In the ear of the Snake said Lilith :—
(Sing Eden Bower !)
 “To thee I come when the rest is over ;
 A snake was I when thou wast my lover.

"I was the fairest snake in Eden :
(*Alas the hour !*)
By the earth's will, new form and feature
Made me a wife for the earth's new creature.

“Take me thou as I come from Adam :
(Sing Eden Bower !)
 Once again shall my love subdue thee ;
 The past is past and I am come to thee.

“O but Adam was thrall to Lilith!
(Alas the hour!)
 All the threads of my hair are golden,
 And there in a net his heart was holden.

“O and Lilith was queen of Adam!
(*Sing Eden Bower!*)
All the day and the night together
My breath could shake his soul like a feather.

“What great joys had Adam and Lilith!—
(Alas the hour!)
 Sweet close rings of the serpent's twining,
 As heart in heart lay sighing and pining.

“What bright babes had Lilith and Adam!
(*Sing Eden Bower!*)
Shapes that coiled in the woods and waters,
Glittering sons and radiant daughters.

" O thou God, the Lord God of Eden !

(Alas the hour !)

Say, was this fair body for no man,
That of Adam's flesh thou mak'st him a woman ?

" O thou Snake, the King-snake of Eden !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

God's strong will our necks are under,
But thou and I may cleave it in sunder.

" Help, sweet Snake, sweet lover of Lilith !

(Alas the hour !)

And let God learn how I loved and hated
Man in the image of God created.

" Help me once against Eve and Adam !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Help me once for this one endeavour,
And then my love shall be thine for ever !

" Strong is God, the fell foe of Lilith :

(Alas the hour !)

Nought in heaven or earth may affright Him ;
But join thou with me and we will smite Him.

" Strong is God, the great God of Eden :

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Over all He made He hath power ;
But lend me thou thy shape for an hour !

" Lend thy shape for the love of Lilith !

(Alas the hour !)

Look, my mouth and my cheek are ruddy,
And thou art cold, and fire is my body.

" Lend thy shape for the hate of Adam !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

That he may wail my joy that forsook him,
And curse the day when the bride-sleep took him.

" Lend thy shape for the shame of Eden !

(Alas the hour !)

Is not the foe-God weak as the foeman
When love grows hate in the heart of a woman ?

" Wouldst thou know the heart's hope of Lilith ?

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Then bring thou close thine head till it glisten
Along my breast, and lip me and listen.

" Am I sweet, O sweet Snake of Eden ?

(Alas the hour !)

Then ope thine ear to my warm mouth's cooing
And learn what deed remains for our doing.

" Thou didst hear when God said to Adam :—

(Sing Eden Bower !)

' Of all this wealth I have made thee warden ;
Thou'rt free to eat of the trees of the garden :

" 'Only of one tree eat not in Eden :

(Alas the hour !)

All save one I give to thy freewill,—

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.'

" O my love, come nearer to Lilith !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

In thy sweet folds bind me and bend me,

And let me feel the shape thou shalt lend me.

" In thy shape I'll go back to Eden ;

(Alas the hour !)

In these coils that Tree will I grapple,

And stretch this crowned head forth by the apple.

" Lo, Eve bends to the breath of Lilith !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

O how then shall my heart desire

All her blood as food to its fire !

" Lo, Eve bends to the words of Lilith !—

(Alas the hour !)

' Nay, this Tree's fruit,—why should ye hate it,

Or Death be born the day that ye ate it ?

" 'Nay, but on that great day in Eden,

(Sing Eden Bower !)

By the help that in this wise Tree is,

God knows well ye shall be as He is.'

" Then Eve shall eat and give unto Adam ;

(Alas the hour !)

And then they both shall know they are naked,

And their hearts ache as my heart hath achèd.

" Ay, let them hide 'mid the trees of Eden,

(Sing Eden Bower !)

As in the cool of the day in the garden

God shall walk without pity or pardon.

" Hear, thou Eve, the man's heart in Adam !

(Alas the hour !)

Of his brave words hark to the bravest :—

' This the woman gave that thou gavest.'

" Hear Eve speak, yea list to her, Lilith !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Feast thine heart with words that shall sate it—

' This the serpent gave and I ate it.'

" O proud Eve, cling close to thine Adam,

(Alas the hour !)

Driven forth as the beasts of his naming

By the sword that for ever is flaming.

" Know, thy path is known unto Lilith !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

While the blithe birds sang at thy wedding,

There her tears grew thorns for thy treading.

“ O my love, thou Love-snake of Eden !
(Alas the hour !)
 O to-day and the day to come after !
 Loose me, love,—give breath to my laughter.

“ O bright Snake, the Death-worm of Adam !
(Sing Eden Bower !)
 Wreathe thy neck with my hair's bright tether,
 And wear my gold and thy gold together !

“ On that day on the skirts of Eden,
(Alas the hour !)
 In thy shape shall I glide back to thee,
 And in my shape for an instant view thee.

" But when thou'rt thou and Lilith is Lilith,
 (*Sing Eden Bower !*)
In what bliss past hearing or seeing
Shall each one drink of the other's being !

‘ With cries of ‘ Eve ! ’ and ‘ Eden ! ’ and ‘ Adam ! ’
(Alas the hour !)
 How shall we mingle our love’s caresses,
 I in thy coils, and thou in my tresses !

" With those names, ye echoes of Eden,
 (*Sing Eden Bower !*)
Fire shall cry from my heart that burneth,—
'Dust he is and to dust returneth !'

“ Yet to-day, thou master of Lilith, —
(Alas the hour !)
 Wrap me round in the form I'll borrow
 And let me tell thee of sweet to-morrow.

“ In the planted garden eastward in Eden,
(Sing Eden Bower !)
 Where the river goes forth to water the garden,
 The springs shall dry and the soil shall harden.

“ Yea, where the bride-sleep fell upon Adam,
(*Alas the hour !*)
None shall hear when the storm-wind whistles
Through roses choked among thorns and thistles.

“ Yea, beside the east-gate of Eden,
(*Sing Eden Bower !*)
 Where God joined them and none might sever,
 The sword turns this way and that for ever.

“What of Adam cast out of Eden?
(Alas the hour!)
 Lo! with care like a shadow shaken,
 He tills the hard earth whence he was taken.

“ What of Eve too, cast out of Eden?
(Sing Eden Bower !)
 Nay, but she, the bride of God's giving,
 Must yet be mother of all men living.

"Lo, God's grace, by the grace of Lilith!
(*Alas the hour!*)
To Eve's womb, from our sweet to-morrow,
God shall greatly multiply sorrow.

"Fold me fast, O God-snake of Eden!
(*Sing Eden Bower!*)
What more prize than love to impel thee?
Grip and lip my limbs as I tell thee!

"Lo! two babes for Eve and for Adam!
(*Alas the hour!*)
Lo! sweet Snake, the travail and treasure,—
Two men-children born for their pleasure!

"The first is Cain and the second Abel:
(*Sing Eden Bower!*)
The soul of one shall be made thy brother,
And thy tongue shall lap the blood of the other."
(*Alas the hour!*)

THE STREAM'S SECRET

WHAT thing unto mine ear
Wouldst thou convey,—what secret thing,
O wandering water ever whispering?
Surely thy speech shall be of her.
Thou water, O thou whispering wanderer,
What message dost thou bring?

Say, hath not Love leaned low
This hour beside thy far well-head,
And there through jealous hollowed fingers said
The thing that most I long to know,—
Murmuring with curls all dabbled in thy flow
And washed lips rosy red?

He told it to thee there
Where thy voice hath a louder tone;
But where it welters to this little moan
His will decrees that I should hear.
Now speak: for with the silence is no fear,
And I am all alone.

Shall Time not still endow
One hour with life, and I and she
Slake in one kiss the thirst of memory?
Say, stream; lest Love should disavow
Thy service, and the bird upon the bough
Sing first to tell it me.

What whisperest thou? Nay, why
Name the dead hours? I mind them well:
Their ghosts in many darkened doorways dwell
With desolate eyes to know them by.
The hour that must be born ere it can die,—
Of that I'd have thee tell.

But hear, before thou speak!
Withhold, I pray, the vain behest
That while the maze hath still its bower for quest
My burning heart should cease to seek.
Be sure that Love ordained for souls more meek
His roadside dells of rest.

Stream, when this silver thread
In flood-time is a torrent brown
May any bulwark bind thy foaming crown?
Shall not the waters surge and spread
And to the crannied boulders of their bed
Still shoot the dead drift down?

Let no rebuke find place
In speech of thine : or it shall prove
That thou dost ill expound the words of Love,
Even as thine eddy's rippling race
Would blur the perfect image of his face.
I will have none thereof.

O learn and understand
That 'gainst the wrongs himself did wreak
Love sought her aid ; until her shadowy cheek
And eyes beseeching gave command ;
And compassed in her close compassionate hand
My heart must burn and speak.

For then at last we spoke
What eyes so oft had told to eyes
Through that long-lingering silence whose half-sighs
Alone the buried secret broke,
Which with snatched hands and lips' reverberate stroke
Then from the heart did rise.

But she is far away
Now ; nor the hours of night grown hoar
Bring yet to me, long gazing from the door,
The wind-stirred robe of roseate grey
And rose-crown of the hour that leads the day
When we shall meet once more.

Dark as thy blinded wave
When brimming midnight floods the glen,—
Bright as the laughter of thy runnels when
The dawn yields all the light they crave ;
Even so these hours to wound and that to save
Are sisters in Love's ken.

Oh sweet her bending grace
Then when I kneel beside her feet ;
And sweet her eyes' o'erhanging heaven ; and sweet
The gathering folds of her embrace ;
And her fall'n hair at last shed round my face
When breaths and tears shall meet.

Beneath her sheltering hair,
In the warm silence near her breast,
Our kisses and our sobs shall sink to rest ;
As in some still trance made aware
That day and night have wrought to fulness there
And Love has built our nest.

And as in the dim grove,
When the rains cease that hushed them long,
'Mid glistening boughs the song-birds wake to song,—
So from our hearts deep-shrined in love,
While the leaves throb beneath, around, above,
The quivering notes shall throng.

Till tenderest words found vain
Draw back to wonder mute and deep,
And closed lips in closed arms a silence keep,
Subdued by memory's circling strain,—
The wind-rapt sound that the wind brings again
While all the willows weep.

Then by her summoning art
 Shall memory conjure back the sere
 Autumnal Springs, from many a dying year
 Born dead ; and, bitter to the heart,
 The very ways where now we walk apart
 Who then shall cling so near.

And with each thought new-grown,
 Some sweet caress or some sweet name
 Low-breathed shall let me know her thought the same ;
 Making me rich with every tone
 And touch of the dear heaven so long unknown
 That filled my dreams with flame.

Pity and love shall burn
 In her pressed cheek and cherishing hands ;
 And from the living spirit of love that stands
 Between her lips to soothe and yearn,
 Each separate breath shall clasp me round in turn
 And loose my spirit's bands.

Oh passing sweet and dear,
 Then when the worshipped form and face
 Are felt at length in darkling close embrace ;
 Round which so oft the sun shone clear,
 With mocking light and pitiless atmosphere,
 In many an hour and place.

Ah me ! with what proud growth
 Shall that hour's thirsting race be run ;
 While, for each several sweetness still begun
 Afresh, endures love's endless drouth :
 Sweet hands, sweet hair, sweet cheeks, sweet eyes, sweet mouth,
 Each singly wooed and won.

Yet most with the sweet soul
 Shall love's espousals then be knit ;
 For very passion of peace shall breathe from it
 O'er tremulous wings that touch the goal,
 As on the unmeasured height of Love's control
 The lustral fires are lit.

Therefore, when breast and cheek
 Now part, from long embraces free,—
 Each on the other gazing shall but see
 A self that has no heed to speak :
 All things unsought, yet nothing more to seek,—
 One love in unity.

O water wandering past,—
 Albeit to thee I speak this thing,
 O water, thou that wanderest whispering,
 Thou keep'st thy counsel to the last.
 What spell upon thy bosom should Love cast,
 His message thence to wring ?

Nay, must thou hear the tale
 Of the past days,—the heavy debt
 Of life that obdurate time withholds,—ere yet
 To win thine ear these prayers prevail,
 And by thy voice Love's self with high All-hail
 Yield up the amulet ?

How should all this be told?—
All the sad sum of wayworn days;—
Heart's anguish in the impenetrable maze;
And on the waste uncoloured wold
The visible burthen of the sun grown cold
And the moon's labouring gaze?

Alas! shall hope be nurs'd
On life's all-succouring breast in vain,
And made so perfect only to be slain?
Or shall not rather the sweet thirst
Even yet rejoice the heart with warmth dispers'd
And strength grown fair again?

Stands it not by the door—
Love's Hour—till she and I shall meet;
With bodiless form and unapparent feet
That cast no shadow yet before,
Though round its head the dawn begins to pour
The breath that makes day sweet?

Its eyes invisible
Watch till the dial's thin-thrown shade
Be born,—yea, till the journeying line be laid
Upon the point that wakes the spell,
And there in lovelier light than tongue can tell
Its presence stand array'd.

Its soul remembers yet
Those sunless hours that passed it by;
And still it hears the night's disconsolate cry,
And feels the branches wringing wet
Cast on its brow, that may not once forget,
Dumb tears from the blind sky.

But oh! when now her foot
Draws near, for whose sake night and day
Were long in weary longing sighed away,—
The Hour of Love, 'mid airs grown mute,
Shall sing beside the door, and Love's own lute
Thrill to the passionate lay.

Thou know'st, for Love has told
Within thine ear, O stream, how soon
That song shall lift its sweet appointed tune.
O tell me, for my lips are cold,
And in my veins the blood is waxing old
Even while I beg the boon.

So, in that hour of sighs
Assuaged, shall we beside this stone
Yield thanks for grace; while in thy mirror shown
The twofold image softly lies,
Until we kiss, and each in other's eyes
Is imaged all alone.

Still silent? Can no art
Of Love's then move thy pity? Nay,
To thee let nothing come that owns his sway:
Let happy lovers have no part
With thee; nor even so sad and poor a heart
As thou hast spurned to-day.

To-day? Lo! night is here.
The glen grows heavy with some veil
Risen from the earth or fall'n to make earth pale;
And all stands hushed to eye and ear,
Until the night-wind shake the shade like fear
And every covert quail.

Ah! by a colder wave
On deathlier airs the hour must come
Which to thy heart, my love, shall call me home.
Between the lips of the low cave
Against that night the lapping waters lave,
And the dark lips are dumb.

But there Love's self doth stand,
And with Life's weary wings far-flown,
And with Death's eyes that make the water moan,
Gathers the water in his hand:
And they that drink know nought of sky or land
But only love alone.

O soul-sequestered face
Far off,—O were that night but now!
So even beside that stream even I and thou
Through thirsting lips should draw Love's grace,
And in the zone of that supreme embrace
Bind aching breast and brow.

O water whispering
Still through the dark into mine ears,—
As with mine eyes, is it not now with hers?—
Mine eyes that add to thy cold spring,
Wan water, wandering water weltering,
This hidden tide of tears.

ROSE MARY

*Of her two fights with the Beryl-stone
Lost the first, but the second won.*

PART I

"MARY mine that art Mary's Rose,
Come in to me from the garden-close.
The sun sinks fast with the rising dew,
And we marked not how the faint moon grew;
But the hidden stars are calling you.

"Tall Rose Mary, come to my side,
And read the stars if you'd be a bride.
In hours whose need was not your own,
While you were a young maid yet ungrown
You've read the stars in the Beryl-stone.

"Daughter, once more I bid you read;
But now let it be for your own need:
Because to-morrow, at break of day,
To Holy Cross he rides on his way,
Your knight Sir James of Heronhay.

"Ere he wed you, flower of mine,
For a heavy shrift he seeks the shrine.
Now hark to my words and do not fear;
Ill news next I have for your ear;
But be you strong, and our help is here.

"On his road, as the rumour's rife,
An ambush waits to take his life.
He needs will go, and will go alone;
Where the peril lurks may not be known;
But in this glass all things are shown."

Pale Rose Mary sank to the floor:—
"The night will come if the day is o'er!"
"Nay, heaven takes counsel, star with star,
And help shall reach your heart from afar:
A bride you'll be, as a maid you are."

The lady unbound her jewelled zone
And drew from her robe the Beryl-stone.
Shaped it was to a shadowy sphere,—
World of our world, the sun's compeer,
That bears and buries the toiling year.

With shuddering light 'twas stirred and strewn
 Like the cloud-nest of the wading moon :
 Freaked it was as the bubble's ball,
 Rainbow-hued through a misty pall
 Like the middle light of the waterfall.

Shadows dwelt in its teeming girth
 Of the known and unknown things of earth ;
 The cloud above **and** the wave around,—
 The central fire at the sphere's heart bound,
 Like doomsday prisoned underground.

A thousand years it lay in the sea
 With a treasure wrecked from Thessaly ;
 Deep it lay 'mid the coiled sea-wrack,
 But the ocean-spirits found the track :
 A soul was lost to win it back.

The lady upheld the wondrous thing :—
 " Ill fare " (she said) " with a fiend's-fairing :
 But Moslem blood poured forth like wine
 Can hallow Hell, 'neath the Sacred Sign ;
 And my lord brought this from Palestine.

" Spirits who fear the Blessed Rood
 Drove forth the accursed multitude
 That heathen worship housed herein,—
 Never again such home to win,
 Save only by a Christian's sin.

" All last night at an altar fair
 I burnt strange fires and strove with prayer ;
 Till the flame paled to the red sunrise,
 All rites I then did solemnize ;
 And the spell lacks nothing but your eyes,"

Low spake maiden Rose Mary :—
 " O mother mine, if I should not see ! "
 " Nay, daughter, cover your face no more,
 But bend love's heart to the hidden lore,
 And you shall see now as heretofore."

Paler yet were the pale cheeks grown
 As the grey eyes sought the Beryl-stone :
 Then over her mother's lap leaned she,
 And stretched her thrilled throat passionately,
 And sighed from her soul, and said, " I see."

Even as she spoke, they two were 'ware
 Of music-notes that fell through the air ;
 A chiming shower of strange device,
 Drop echoing drop, once, twice, and thrice,
 As rain may fall in Paradise.

An instant come, in an instant gone,
 No time there was to think thereon.
 The mother held the sphere on her knee :—
 " Lean this way and speak low to me,
 And take no note but of what you see."

"I see a man with a besom grey
That sweeps the flying dust away."
"Ay, that comes first in the mystic sphere;
But now that the way is swept and clear,
Heed well what next you look on there."

"Stretched aloft and adown I see
Two roads that part in waste-country:
The glen lies deep and the ridge stands tall;
What's great below is above seen small,
And the hill-side is the valley-wall."

"Stream-bank, daughter, or moor and moss,
Both roads will take to Holy Cross.
The hills are a weary waste to wage;
But what of the valley-road's presage?
That way must tend his pilgrimage."

"As 'twere the turning leaves of a book,
The road runs past me as I look;
Or it is even as though mine eye
Should watch calm waters filled with sky
While lights and clouds and wings went by,"

"In every covert seek a spear;
They'll scarce lie close till he draws near."
"The stream has spread to a river now;
The stiff blue sedge is deep in the slough,
But the banks are bare of shrub or bough."

"Is there any roof that near at hand
Might shelter yield to a hidden band?"
"On the further bank I see but one,
And a herdsman now in the sinking sun
Unyokes his team at the threshold-stone."

"Keep heedful watch by the water's edge,—
Some boat might lurk 'neath the shadowed sedge."
"One slid but now 'twixt the winding shores,
But a peasant woman bent to the oars
And only a young child steered its course."

"Mother, something flashed to my sight!—
Nay, it is but the lapwing's flight.—
What glints there like a lance that flees?—
Nay, the flags are stirred in the breeze,
And the water's bright through the dart-rushes."

"Ah! vainly I search from side to side:—
Woe's me! and where do the foemen hide?
Woe's me! and perchance I pass them by,
And under the new dawn's blood-red sky
Even where I gaze the dead shall lie."

Said the mother: "For dear love's sake,
Speak more low, lest the spell should break."
Said the daughter: "By love's control,
My eyes, my words, are strained to the goal;
But oh! the voice that cries in my soul!"

"Hush, sweet, hush! be calm and behold."
"I see two floodgates broken and old:
The grasses wave o'er the ruined weir,
But the bridge still leads to the breakwater;
And—mother, mother, O mother dear!"

The damsel clung to her mother's knee,
And dared not let the shriek go free;
Low she crouched by the lady's chair,
And shrank blindfold in her fallen hair,
And whispering said, "The spears are there!"

The lady stooped aghast from her place,
And cleared the locks from her daughter's face.
"More's to see, and she swoons, alas!
Look, look again, ere the moment pass!
One shadow comes but once to the glass.

"See you there what you saw but now?"
"I see eight men 'neath the willow bough.
All over the weir a wild growth's spread:
Ah me! it will hide a living head
As well as the water hides the dead.

"They lie by the broken water-gate
As men who have a while to wait.
The chief's high lance has a blazoned scroll,—
He seems some lord of tithe and toll
With seven squires to his bannerole.

"The little pennon quakes in the air,
I cannot trace the blazon there;—
Ah! now I can see the field of blue,
The spurs and the merlins two and two;—
It is the Warden of Holycleugh!"

"God be thanked for the thing we know!
You have named your good knight's mortal foe.
Last Shrovetide in the tourney-game
He sought his life by treasonous shame;
And this way now doth he seek the same.

"So, fair lord, such a thing you are!
But we too watch till the morning star.
Well, June is kind and the moon is clear:
Saint Judas send you a merry cheer
For the night you lie at Warisweir!

"Now, sweet daughter, but one more sight,
And you may lie soft and sleep to-night.
We know in the vale what perils be:
Now look once more in the glass, and see
If over the hills the road lies free."

Rose Mary pressed to her mother's cheek,
And almost smiled but did not speak;
Then turned again to the saving spell,
With eyes to search and with lips to tell
The heart of things invisible.

"Again the shape with the besom grey
Comes back to sweep the clouds away.
Again I stand where the roads divide ;
But now all's near on the steep hillside,
And a thread far down is the rivertide."

"Ay, child, your road is o'er moor and moss,
Past Holycleugh to Holy Cross.
Our hunters lurk in the valley's wake,
As they knew which way the chase would take :
Yet search the hills for your true love's sake."

"Swift and swifter the waste runs by,
And nought I see but the heath and the sky ;
No brake is there that could hide a spear,
And the gaps to a horseman's sight lie clear ;
Still past it goes, and there's nought to fear."

"Fear no trap that you cannot see,—
They'd not lurk yet too warily.
Below by the weir they lie in sight,
And take no heed how they pass the night
Till close they crouch with the morning light."

"The road shifts ever and brings in view
Now first the heights of Holycleugh :
Dark they stand o'er the vale below,
And hide that heaven which yet shall show
The thing their master's heart doth know."

"Where the road looks to the castle steep,
There are seven hill-clefts wide and deep :
Six mine eyes can search as they list,
But the seventh hollow is brimmed with mist :
If aught were there, it might not be wist."

"Small hope, my girl, for a helm to hide
In mists that cling to a wild moorside :
Soon they melt with the wind and sun,
And scarce would wait such deeds to be done
God send their snares be the worst to shun."

"Still the road winds ever anew
As it hastens on towards Holycleugh ;
And ever the great walls loom more near,
Till the castle-shadow, steep and sheer,
Drifts like a cloud, and the sky is clear."

"Enough, my daughter," the mother said,
And took to her breast the bending head ;
"Rest, poor head, with my heart below,
While love still lulls you as long ago :
For all is learnt that we need to know."

"Long the miles and many the hours
From the castle-height to the abbey-towers ;
But here the journey has no more dread ;
Too thick with life is the whole road spread
For murder's trembling foot to tread."

She gazed on the Beryl-stone full fain
 Ere she wrapped it close in her robe again :
 The flickering shades were dusk and dun
 And the lights throbbed faint in unison
 Like a high heart when a race is run.

As the globe slid to its silken gloom,
 Once more a music rained through the room ;
 Low it splashed like a sweet star-spray,
 And sobbed like tears at the heart of May,
 And died as laughter dies away.

The lady held her breath for a space,
 And then she looked in her daughter's face :
 But wan Rose Mary had never heard ;
 Deep asleep like a sheltered bird
 She lay with the long spell minister'd.

" Ah ! and yet I must leave you, dear,
 For what you have seen your knight must hear.
 Within four days, by the help of God,
 He comes back safe to his heart's abode :
 Be sure he shall shun the valley-road."

Rose Mary sank with a broken moan,
 And lay in the chair and slept alone,
 Weary, lifeless, heavy as lead :
 Long it was ere she raised her head
 And rose up all discomforted.

She searched her brain for a vanished thing,
 And clasped her brows, remembering ;
 Then knelt and lifted her eyes in awe,
 And sighed with a long sigh sweet to draw :—
 " Thank God, thank God, thank God I saw ! "

The lady had left her as she lay,
 To seek the Knight of Heronhay.
 But first she clomb by a secret stair,
 And knelt at a carven altar fair,
 And laid the precious Beryl there.

Its girth was graved with a mystic rune
 In a tongue long dead 'neath sun and moon :
 A priest of the Holy Sepulchre
 Read that writing and did not err ;
 And her lord had told its sense to her.

She breathed the words in an undertone :—
 " *None sees here but the pure alone.*"
 " And oh ! " she said, " what rose may be
 In Mary's bower more pure to see
 Than my own sweet maiden Rose Mary ? "

BERYL-SONG

*We whose home is the Beryl,
 Fire-spirits of dread desire,
 Who entered in
 By a secret sin,
 'Gainst whom all powers that strive with ours are sterile,—*

*We cry, Woe to thee, mother !
 What hast thou taught her, the girl thy daughter,
 That she and none other
 Should this dark morrow to her deadly sorrow imperil ?
 What were her eyes
 But the fiend's own spies,
 O mother,
 And shall We not fee her, our proper prophet and seer ?
 Go to her, mother,
 Even thou, yea thou and none other,
 Thou, from the Beryl :
 Her fee must thou take her,
 Her fee that We send, and make her,
 Even in this hour, her sin's unsheltered avower.
 Whose steed did neigh,
 Riderless, bridleless,
 At her gate before it was day ?
 Lo ! where doth hover
 The soul of her lover ?
 She sealed his doom, she, she was the sworn approver,—
 Whose eyes were so wondrous wise,
 Yet blind, ah ! blind to his peril !
 For stole not We in
 Through a love-linked sin,
 'Gainst whom all powers at war with ours are sterile,—
 Fire-spirits of dread desire,
 We whose home is the Beryl ?*

PART II

"PALE Rose Mary, what shall be done
 With a rose that Mary weeps upon ?"
 "Mother, let it fall from the tree,
 And never walk where the strewn leaves be
 Till winds have passed and the path is free."

"Sad Rose Mary, what shall be done
 With a cankered flower beneath the sun ?"
 "Mother, let it wait for the night;
 Be sure its shame shall be out of sight
 Ere the moon pale or the east grow light."

"Lost Rose Mary, what shall be done
 With a heart that is but a broken one ?"
 "Mother, let it lie where it must;
 The blood was drained with the bitter thrust,
 And dust is all that sinks in the dust."

"Poor Rose Mary, what shall I do,—
 I, your mother, that lovèd you ?"
 "O my mother, and is love gone ?
 Then seek you another love anon :
 Who cares what shame shall lean upon ?"

Low drooped trembling Rose Mary,
 Then up as though in a dream stood she.
 "Come, my heart, it is time to go ;
 This is the hour that has whispered low
 When thy pulse quailed in the nights we know,

"Yet O my heart, thy shame has a mate
Who will not leave thee desolate.
Shame for shame, yea and sin for sin :
Yet peace at length may our poor souls win
If love for love be found therein.

"O thou who seek'st our shrift to-day,"
She cried, "O James of Heronhay—
Thy sin and mine was for love alone ;
And oh ! in the sight of God 'tis known
How the heart has since made heavy moan.

"Three days yet !" she said to her heart ;
"But then he comes, and we will not part.
God, God be thanked that I still could see !
Oh ! he shall come back assuredly,
But where, alas ! must he seek for me ?

"O my heart, what road shall we roam
Till my wedding-music fetch me home ?
For love's shut from us and bides afar,
And scorn leans over the bitter bar
And knows us now for the thing we are."

Tall she stood with a cheek flushed high
And a gaze to burn the heart-strings by.
'Twas the lightning-flash o'er sky and plain
Ere labouring thunders heave the chain
From the floodgates of the drowning rain.

The mother looked on the daughter still
As on a hurt thing that's yet to kill.
Then wildly at length the pent tears came ;
The love swelled high with the swollen shame,
And their hearts' tempest burst on them.

Closely locked, they clung without speech,
And the mirrored souls shook each to each,
As the cloud-moon and the water-moon
Shake face to face when the dim stars swoon
In stormy bowers of the night's mid-noon,

They swayed together, shuddering sore,
Till the mother's heart could bear no more.
'Twas death to feel her own breast shake
Even to the very throb and ache
Of the burdened heart she still must break,

All her sobs ceased suddenly,
And she sat straight up but scarce could see.
"O daughter, where should my speech begin ?
Your heart held fast its secret sin :
How think you, child, that I read therein ?"

"Ah me ! but I thought not how it came
When your words showed that you knew my shame :
And now that you call me still your own,
I half forget you have ever known.
Did you read my heart in the Beryl-stone ?"

The lady answered her mournfully :—

“ The Beryl-stone has no voice for me :
But when you charged its power to show
The truth which none but the pure may know,
Did naught speak once of a coming woe ? ”

Her hand was close to her daughter's heart,
And it felt the life-blood's sudden start :
A quick deep breath did the damsel draw,
Like the struck fawn in the oakenshaw :
“ O mother,” she cried, “ but still I saw ! ”

“ O child, my child, why held you apart
From my great love your hidden heart ?
Said I not that all sin must chase
From the spell's sphere the spirits of grace,
And yield their rule to the evil race ?

“ Ah ! would to God I had clearly told
How strong those powers, accurst of old :
Their heart is the ruined house of lies ;
O girl, they can seal the sinful eyes,
Or show the truth by contraries ! ”

The daughter sat as cold as a stone,
And spoke no word but gazed alone,
Nor moved, though her mother strove a space
To clasp her round in a close embrace,
Because she dared not see her face.

“ Oh ! ” at last did the mother cry,
“ Be sure, as he loved you, so will I !
Ah ! still and dumb is the bride, I trow ;
But cold and stark as the winter snow
Is the bridegroom's heart, laid dead below !

“ Daughter, daughter, remember you
That cloud in the hills by Holycleugh ?
'Twas a Hell-screen hiding truth away :
There, not i' the vale, the ambush lay,
And thence was the dead borne home to-day.”

Deep the flood and heavy the shock.
When sea meets sea in the riven rock :
But calm is the pulse that shakes the sea
To the prisoned tide of doom set free
In the breaking heart of Rose Mary.

Once she sprang as the heifer springs
With the wolf's teeth at its red heart-strings,
First 'twas fire in her breast and brain,
And then scarce hers but the whole world's pain,
As she gave one shriek and sank again.

In the hair dark-waved the face lay white
As the moon lies in the lap of night ;
And as night through which no moon may dart
Lies on a pool in the woods apart,
So lay the swoon on the weary heart.

The lady felt for the bosom's stir,
 And wildly kissed and called on her;
 Then turned away with a quick footfall,
 And slid the secret door in the wall,
 And clomb the strait stair's interval.

There above in the altar-cell
 A little fountain rose and fell:
 She set a flask to the water's flow,
 And, backward hurrying, sprinkled now
 The still cold breast and the pallid brow.

Scarce cheek that warmed or breath on the air,
 Yet something told that life was there.
 "Ah! not with the heart the body dies!"
 The lady moaned in a bitter wise;
 Then wrung her hands and hid her eyes.

"Alas! and how may I meet again
 In the same poor eyes the selfsame pain?
 What help can I seek, such grief to guide?
 Ah! one alone might avail," she cried —
 "The priest who prays at the dead man's side."

The lady arose, and sped down all
 The winding stairs to the castle-hall.
 Long-known valley and wood and stream,
 As the loopholes passed, naught else did seem
 Than the torn threads of a broken dream.

The hall was full of the castle-folk;
 The women wept, but the men scarce spoke.
 As the lady crossed the rush-strewn floor,
 The throng fell backward, murmuring sore,
 And pressed outside round the open door.

A stranger shadow hung on the hall
 Than the dark pomp of a funeral.
 'Mid common sights that were there alway,
 As 'twere a chance of the passing day,
 On the ingle-bench the dead man lay.

A priest who passed by Holycleugh
 The tidings brought when the day was new,
 He guided them who had fetched the dead;
 And since that hour, unwearied,
 He knelt in prayer at the low bier's head.

Word had gone to his own domain
 That in evil wise the knight was slain:
 Soon the spears must gather apace
 And the hunt be hard on the hunters' trace;
 But all things yet lay still for a space.

As the lady's hurried step drew near,
 The kneeling priest looked up to her.
 "Father, death is a grievous thing;
 But oh! the woe has a sharper sting
 That craves by me your ministering.

"Alas for the child that should have wed
This noble knight here lying dead!
Dead in hope, with all blessed boon
Of love thus rent from her heart ere noon,
I left her laid in a heavy swoon.

"O haste to the open bower-chamber
That's topmost as you mount the stair:
Seek her, father, ere yet she wake;
Your words, not mine, be the first to slake
This poor heart's fire, for Christ's sweet sake!

"God speed!" she said as the priest passed through,
"And I ere long will be with you."
Then low on the hearth her knees sank prone;
She signed all folk from the threshold-stone,
And gazed in the dead man's face alone.

The fight for life found record yet
In the clenched lips and the teeth hard-set;
The wrath from the bent brow was not gone,
And stark in the eyes the hate still shone
Of that they last had looked upon.

The blazoned coat was rent on his breast
Where the golden field was goodliest;
But the shivered sword, close-gripped, could tell
That the blood shed round him where he fell
Was not all his in the distant dell.

The lady recked of the corpse no whit,
But saw the soul and spoke to it:
A light there was in her steadfast eyes,—
The fire of mortal tears and sighs
That pity and love immortalize.

"By thy death have I learnt to-day
Thy deed, O James of Heronhay!
Great wrong thou hast done to me and mine;
And haply God hath wrought for a sign
By our blind deed this doom of thine.

"Thy shrift, alas! thou wast not to win;
But may death shrive thy soul herein!
Full well do I know thy love should be
Even yet—had life but stayed with thee—
Our honour's strong security."

She stooped, and said with a sob's low stir,—
"Peace be thine,—but what peace for her?"
But ere to the brow her lips were press'd,
She marked, half-hid in the riven vest,
A packet close to the dead man's breast.

'Neath surcoat pierced and broken mail
It lay on the blood-stained bosom pale.
The clot hung round it, dull and dense,
And a faintness seized her mortal sense
As she reached her hand and drew it thence.

'Twas steeped in the heart's flood welling high
 From the heart it there had rested by :
 'Twas glued to a brodered fragment gay,—
 A shred by spear-thrust rent away
 From the heron-wings of Heronhay.

She gazed on the thing with piteous eyne :—
 " Alas, poor child, some pledge of thine !
 Ah me ! in this troth the hearts were twain,
 And one hath ebbed to this crimson stain,
 And when shall the other throb again ? "

She opened the packet heedfully ;
 The blood was stiff, and it scarce might be.
 She found but a folded paper there,
 And round it, twined with tenderest care,
 A long bright tress of golden hair.

Even as she looked, she saw again
 That dark-haired face in its swoon of pain :
 It seemed a snake with a golden sheath
 Crept near, as a slow flame flickereth,
 And stung her daughter's heart to death.

She loosed the tress, but her hand did shake
 As though indeed she had touched a snake ;
 And next she undid the paper's fold,
 But that too trembled in her hold,
 And the sense scarce grasped the tale it told.

" My heart's sweet lord," ('twas thus she read,)
 " At length our love is garlanded.
 At Holy Cross, within eight days' space,
 I seek my shrift ; and the time and place
 Shall fit thee too for thy soul's good grace.

" From Holycleugh on the seventh day
 My brother rides, and bides away :
 And long or e'er he is back, mine own,
 Afar where the face of fear's unknown
 We shall be safe with our love alone.

" Ere yet at the shrine my knees I bow,
 I shear one tress for our holy vow.
 As round these words these threads I wind,
 So, eight days hence, shall our loves be twined,
 Says my lord's poor lady, JOCELIND."

She read it twice, with a brain in thrall,
 And then its echo told her all.
 O'er brows low-fall'n her hands she drew :—
 " O God ! " she said, as her hands fell too,—
 " The Warden's sister of Holycleugh ! "

She rose upright with a long low moan,
 And stared in the dead man's face new-known.
 Had it lived indeed ? She scarce could tell :
 'Twas a cloud where fiends had come to dwell,—
 A mask that hung on the gate of Hell.

She lifted the lock of gleaming hair
 And smote the lips and left it there.
 "Here's gold that Hell shall take for thy toll!
 Full well hath thy treason found its goal,
 O thou dead body and damnèd soul!"

She turned, sore dazed, for a voice was near,
 And she knew that some one called to her.
 On many a column fair and tall
 A high court ran round the castle-hall;
 And thence it was that the priest did call.

"I sought your child where you bade me go,
 And in rooms around and rooms below;
 But where, alas! may the maiden be?
 Fear nought,—we shall find her speedily,—
 But come, come hither, and seek with me."

She reached the stair like a lifelorn thing,
 But hastened upward murmuring—
 "Yea, Death's is a face that's fell to see;
 But bitterer pang Life hoards for thee,
 Thou broken heart of Rose Mary!"

BERYL-SONG

*We whose throne is the Beryl,
 Dire-gifted spirits of fire,
 Who for a twin
 Leash Sorrow to Sin,
 Who on no flower refrain to lour with peril,—
 We cry,—O desolate daughter!
 Thou and thy mother share newer shame with each other
 Than last night's slaughter.
 Awake and tremble, for our curses assemble!
 What more, that thou know'st not yet,—
 That life nor death shall forget?
 No help from Heaven,—thy woes heart-riven are sterile!
 O once a maiden,
 With yet worse sorrow can any morrow be laden?
 It waits for thee,
 It looms, it must be,
 O lost among women,—
 It comes and thou canst not flee.
 Amen to the omen,
 Says the voice of the Beryl.
 Thou sleep'st? Awake,—
 What dar'st thou yet for his sake,
 Who each for other did God's own Future imperil?
 Dost dare to live
 'Mid the pangs each hour must give?
 Nay, rather die,—
 With him thy lover 'neath Hell's cloud-cover to fly,—
 Hopeless, yet not apart,
 Cling heart to heart,
 And beat through the nether storm-eddy winds together?
 Shall this be so?
 There thou shalt meet him, but mayst thou greet him? ah no!*

*He loves, but thee he hoped nevermore to see,—
 He sighed as he died,
 But with never a thought for thee.
 Alone !*

*Alone, for ever alone,—
 Whose eyes were such wondrous spies for the fate foreshown !
 Lo ! have not We leashed the twin
 Of endless Sorrow to Sin,—
 Who on no flower refrain to lour with peril,—
 Dire-gifted spirits of fire,
 We whose throne is the Beryl?*

PART III

A swoon that breaks is the whelming wave
 When help comes late but still can save.
 With all blind throes is the instant rife,—
 Hurling clangour and clouds at strife,—
 The breath of death, but the kiss of life.

The night lay deep on Rose Mary's heart,
 For her swoon was death's kind counterpart :
 The dawn broke dim on Rose Mary's soul,—
 No hill-crown's heavenly aureole,
 But a wild gleam on a shaken shoal.

Her senses gasped in the sudden air,
 And she looked around, but none was there.
 She felt the slackening frost distil
 Through her blood the last ooze dull and chill :
 Her lids were dry and her lips were still.

Her tears had flooded her heart again ;
 As after a long day's bitter rain,
 At dusk when the wet flower-cups shrink,
 The drops run in from the beaded brink,
 And all the close-shut petals drink.

Again her sighs on her heart were rolled ;
 As the wind that long has swept the wold,—
 Whose moan was made with the moaning sea,—
 Beats out its breath in the last torn tree,
 And sinks at length in lethargy.

She knew she had waded bosom-deep
 Along death's bank in the sedge of sleep :
 All else was lost to her clouded mind ;
 Nor, looking back, could she see defin'd
 O'er the dim dumb waste what lay behind.

Slowly fades the sun from the wall
 Till day lies dead on the sun-dial :
 And now in Rose Mary's lifted eye
 'Twas shadow alone that made reply
 To the set face of the soul's dark sky.

Yet still through her soul there wandered past
 Dread phantoms borne on a wailing blast,—
 Death and sorrow and sin and shame ;
 And, murmured still, to her lips there came
 Her mother's and her lover's name.

How to ask, and what thing to know ?
She might not stay and she dared not go.
From fires unseen these smoke-clouds curled ;
But where did the hidden curse lie furled ?
And how to seek through the weary world ?

With toiling breath she rose from the floor
And dragged her steps to an open door :
'Twas the secret panel standing wide ;
As the lady's hand had let it bide
In hastening back to her daughter's side.

She passed, but reeled with a dizzy brain
And smote the door which closed again.
She stood within by the darkling stair,
But her feet might mount more freely there,—
'Twas the open light most blinded her.

Within her mind no wonder grew
At the secret path she never knew :
All ways alike were strange to her now,—
One field bare-ridged from the spirit's plough,
One thicket black with the cypress-bough.

Once she thought that she heard her name ;
And she paused, but knew not whence it came.
Down the shadowed stair a faint ray fell
That guided the weary footsteps well
Till it led her up to the altar-cell.

No change there was on Rose Mary's face
As she leaned in the portal's narrow space :
Still she stood by the pillar's stem,
Hand and bosom and garment's hem,
As the soul stands by at the requiem.

The altar-cell was a dome low-lit,
And a veil hung in the midst of it :
At the pole-points of its circling girth
Four symbols stood of the world's first birth,—
Air and water and fire and earth.

To the north, a fountain glittered free ;
To the south, there glowed a red fruit-tree ;
To the east, a lamp flamed high and fair ;
To the west, a crystal casket rare
Held fast a cloud of the fields of air.

The painted walls were a mystic show
Of time's ebb-tide and overflow ;
His hoards long-locked and conquering key,
His service-fires that in heaven be,
And earth-wheels whirled perpetually.

Rose Mary gazed from the open door
As on idle things she cared not for,—
The fleeting shapes of an empty tale ;
Then stepped with a heedless visage pale,
And lifted aside the altar-veil.

The altar stood from its curved recess
In a coiling serpent's life-likeness :
Even such a serpent evermore
Lies deep asleep at the world's dark core
Till the last Voice shake the sea and shore.

From the altar-cloth a book rose spread
And tapers burned at the altar-head ;
And there in the altar-midst alone,
'Twixt wings of a sculptured beast unknown,
Rose Mary saw the Beryl-stone.

Firm it sat 'twixt the hollowed wings,
As an orb sits in the hand of kings :
And lo ! for that Foe whose curse far-flown
Had bound her life with a burning zone,
Rose Mary knew the Beryl-stone.

Dread is the meteor's blazing sphere
When the poles throb to its blind career ;
But not with a light more grim and ghast
Thereby is the future doom forecast,
Than now this sight brought back the past.

The hours and minutes seemed to whirl
In a clanging swarm that deafened her ;
They stung her heart to a writhing flame,
And marshalled past in its glare they came,—
Death and sorrow and sin and shame.

Round the Beryl's sphere she saw them pass
And mock her eyes from the fated glass :
One by one in a fiery train
The dead hours seemed to wax and wane,
And burned till all was known again.

From the drained heart's fount there rose no cry,
There sprang no tears, for the source was dry.
Held in the hand of some heavy law,
Her eyes she might not once withdraw,
Nor shrink away from the thing she saw.

Even as she gazed, through all her blood
The flame was quenched in a coming flood :
Out of the depth of the hollow gloom
On her soul's bare sands she felt it boom,—
The measured tide of a sea of doom.

Three steps she took through the altar-gate,
And her neck reared and her arms grew straight :
The sinews clenched like a serpent's throe,
And the face was white in the dark hair's flow,
As her hate beheld what lay below.

Dumb she stood in her malisons,—
A silver statue tressed with bronze :
As the fabled head by Perseus mown,
It seemed in sooth that her gaze alone
Had turned the carven shapes to stone.

O'er the altar-sides on either hand
There hung a dinted helm and brand :
By strength thereof, 'neath the Sacred Sign,
That bitter gift o'er the salt sea-brine
Her father brought from Palestine.

Rose Mary moved with a stern accord
And reached her hand to her father's sword ;
Nor did she stir her gaze one whit
From the thing whereon her brows were knit ;
But gazing still, she spoke to it.

" O ye, three times accurst," she said,
" By whom this stone is tenanted !
Lo ! here ye came by a strong sin's might ;
Yet a sinner's hand that's weak to smite
Shall send you hence ere the day be night.

" This hour a clear voice bade me know
My hand shall work your overthrow :
Another thing in mine ear it spake,—
With the broken spell my life shall break.
I thank Thee, God, for the dear death's sake !

" And he Thy heavenly minister
Who swayed erewhile this spell-bound sphere,—
My parting soul let him haste to greet,
And none but he be guide for my feet
To where Thy rest is made complete."

Then deep she breathed, with a tender moan :—
" My love, my lord, my only one !
Even as I held the cursed clue,
When thee, through me, these foul ones slew,—
By mine own deed shall they slay me too !

" Even while they speed to Hell, my love,
Two hearts shall meet in Heaven above.
Our shrift thou sought'st, but might'st not bring :
And oh ! for me 'tis a blessed thing
To work hereby our ransoming.

" One were our hearts in joy and pain,
And our souls e'en now grow one again.
And O my love, if our souls are three,
O thine and mine shall the third soul be,—
One threefold love eternally."

Her eyes were soft as she spoke apart,
And the lips smiled to the broken heart :
But the glance was dark and the forehead scored
With the bitter frown of hate restored,
As her two hands swung the heavy sword.

Three steps back from her Foe she trod :—
" Love, for thy sake ! In Thy Name, O God !"
In the fair white hands small strength was shown ;
Yet the blade flashed high and the edge fell prone,
And she cleft the heart of the Beryl-stone.

What living flesh in the thunder-cloud
Hath sat and felt heaven cry aloud ?
Or known how the levin's pulse may beat ?
Or wrapped the hour when the whirlwinds meet
About its breast for a winding-sheet ?

Who hath crouched at the world's deep heart
While the earthquake rends its loins apart ?
Or walked far under the seething main
While overhead the heavens ordain
The tempest-towers of the hurricane ?

Who hath seen or what ear hath heard
The secret things unregistr'd
Of the place where all is past and done,
And tears and laughter sound as one
In Hell's unhallowed unison ?

Nay, is it writ how the fiends despair
In earth and water and fire and air ?
Even so no mortal tongue may tell
How to the clang of the sword that fell
The echoes shook the altar-cell.

When all was still on the air again
The Beryl-stone lay cleft in twain ;
The veil was rent from the riven dome ;
And every wind that's winged to roam
Might have the ruined place for home.

The fountain no more glittered free ;
The fruit hung dead on the leafless tree ;
The flame of the lamp had ceased to flare ;
And the crystal casket shattered there
Was emptied now of its cloud of air.

And lo ! on the ground Rose Mary lay,
With a cold brow like the snows ere May,
With a cold breast like the earth till Spring,
With such a smile as the June days bring
When the year grows warm with harvesting.

The death she had won might leave no trace
On the soft sweet form and gentle face :
In a gracious sleep she seemed to lie ;
And over her head her hand on high
Held fast the sword she triumphed by.

'Twas then a clear voice said in the room :—
" Behold the end of the heavy doom.
O come,—for thy bitter love's sake blest ;
By a sweet path now thou journeyest,
And I will lead thee to thy rest.

" Me thy sin by Heaven's sore ban
Did chase erewhile from the talisman :
But to my heart, as a conquered home,
In glory of strength thy footsteps come
Who hast thus cast forth my foes therefrom.

"Already thy heart remembereth
No more his name thou sought'st in death :
For under all deeps, all heights above,—
So wide the gulf in the midst thereof,—
Are Hell of Treason and Heaven of Love.

"Thee, true soul, shall thy truth prefer
To blessed Mary's rose-bower :
Warmed and lit is thy place afar.
With guerdon-fires of the sweet Love-star
Where hearts of steadfast lovers are :—

"Though naught for the poor corpse lying here
Remain to-day but the cold white bier,
But burial-chaunt and bended knee,
But sighs and tears that heaviest be,
But rent rose-flower and rosemary."

BERYL-SONG

*We, cast forth from the Beryl,
Gyre-circling spirits of fire,
Whose pangs begin
With God's grace to sin,
For whose spent powers the immortal hours are sterile,—
Woe! must We behold this mother
Find grace in her dead child's face, and doubt of none other
But that perfect pardon, alas! hath assured her guerdon?
Woe! must We behold this daughter,
Made clean from the soil of sin wherewith We had fraught her,
Shake off a man's blood like water?
Write up her story
On the Gate of Heaven's glory,
Whom there We behold so fair in shining apparel,
And beneath her the ruin
Of our own undoing!
Alas, the Beryl!
We had for a foeman
But one weak woman;
In one day's strife,
Her hope fell dead from her life;
And yet no iron,
Her soul to environ,
Could this manslayer, this false soothsayer imperil!
Lo, where she bows
In the Holy House!
Who now shall dissever her soul from its joy for ever
While every ditty
Of love and plentiful pity
Fills the White City,
And the floor of Heaven to her feet for ever is given?
Hark, a voice cries "Flee!"
Woe! woe! what shelter have We,
Whose pangs begin
With God's grace to sin,
For whose spent powers the immortal hours are sterile,
Gyre-circling spirits of fire,
We, cast forth from the Beryl?*

THE WHITE SHIP

HENRY I. OF ENGLAND.—25TH NOVEMBER 1120

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(The sea hath no King but God alone.)

King Henry held it as life's whole gain
That after his death his son should reign.

'Twas so in my youth I heard men say,
And my old age calls it back to-day.

King Henry of England's realm was he,
And Henry Duke of Normandy.

The times had changed when on either coast
"Clerkly Harry" was all his boast.

Of ruthless strokes full many an one
He had struck to crown himself and his son ;
And his elder brother's eyes were gone.

And when to the chase his court would crowd,
The poor flung ploughshares on his road,
And shrieked : " Our cry is from King to God ! "

But all the chiefs of the English land
Had knelt and kissed the Prince's hand.

And next with his son he sailed to France
To claim the Norman allegiance :

And every baron in Normandy
Had taken the oath of fealty.

'Twas sworn and sealed, and the day had come
When the King and the Prince might journey home :

For Christmas cheer is to home hearts dear,
And Christmas now was drawing near.

Stout Fitz-Stephen came to the King,—
A pilot famous in seafaring ;

And he held to the King, in all men's sight,
A mark of gold for his tribute's right.

"Liege Lord! my father guided the ship
From whose boat your father's foot did slip
When he caught the English soil in his grip,

"And cried: 'By this clasp I claim command
O'er every rood of English land!'

"He was borne to the realm you rule o'er now
In that ship with the archer carved at her prow:

"And thither I'll bear, an it be my due,
Your father's son and his grandson too.

"The famed White Ship is mine in the bay;
From Harfleur's harbour she sails to-day,

"With masts fair-pennoned as Norman spears
And with fifty well-tried mariners."

Quoth the King: "My ships are chosen each one,
But I'll not say nay to Stephen's son.

"My son and daughter and fellowship
Shall cross the water in the White Ship."

The King set sail with the eve's south wind,
And soon he left that coast behind.

The Prince and all his, a princely show,
Remained in the good White Ship to go.

With noble knights and with ladies fair,
With courtiers and sailors gathered there,
Three hundred living souls we were:

And I Berold was the meanest hind
In all that train to the Prince assign'd.

The Prince was a lawless shameless youth;
From his father's loins he sprang without ruth:

Eighteen years till then he had seen,
And the devil's dues in him were eighteen.

And now he cried: "Bring wine from below;
Let the sailors revel ere yet they row:

"Our speed shall o'ertake my father's flight
Though we sail from the harbour at midnight."

The rowers made good cheer without check;
The lords and ladies obeyed his beck;
The night was light, and they danced on the deck.

But at midnight's stroke they cleared the bay,
And the White Ship furrowed the water-way.

The sails were set, and the oars kept tune
To the double flight of the ship and the moon :

Swifter and swifter the White Ship sped
Till she flew as the spirit flies from the dead :

As white as a lily glimmered she
Like a ship's fair ghost upon the sea.

And the Prince cried, " Friends, 'tis the hour to sing !
Is a songbird's course so swift on the wing ? "

And under the winter stars' still throng,
From brown throats, white throats, merry and strong,
The knights and the ladies raised a song.

A song,—nay, a shriek that rent the sky,
That leaped o'er the deep !—the grievous cry
Of three hundred living that now must die.

An instant shriek that sprang to the shock
As the ship's keel felt the sunken rock.

'Tis said that afar—a shrill strange sigh—
The King's ships heard it and knew not why.

Pale Fitz-Stephen stood by the helm
'Mid all those folk that the waves must whelm.

A great King's heir for the waves to whelm,
And the helpless pilot pale at the helm !

The ship was eager and sucked athirst,
By the stealthy stab of the sharp reef pierc'd :

And like the moil round a sinking cup
The waters against her crowded up.

A moment the pilot's senses spin,—
The next he snatched the Prince 'mid the din,
Cut the boat loose, and the youth leaped in.

A few friends leaped with him, standing near.
" Row ! the sea's smooth and the night is clear ! "

" What ! none to be saved but these and I ? "
" Row, row as you'd live ! All here must die ! "

Out of the churn of the choking ship,
Which the gulf grapples and the waves strip,
They struck with the strained oars' flash and dip.

'Twas then o'er the splitting bulwarks' brim
The Prince's sister screamed to him.

He gazed aloft, still rowing apace,
And through the whirled surf he knew her face.

To the toppling decks clave one and all
As a fly cleaves to a chamber-wall.

I Berold was clinging anear;
I prayed for myself and quaked with fear,
But I saw his eyes as he looked at her.

He knew her face and he heard her cry,
And he said, "Put back! she must not die!"

And back with the current's force they reel
Like a leaf that's drawn to a water-wheel.

'Neath the ship's travail they scarce might float,
But he rose and stood in the rocking boat.

Low the poor ship leaned on the tide:
O'er the naked keel as she best might slide,
The sister toiled to the brother's side.

He reached an oar to her from below,
And stiffened his arms to clutch her so.

But now from the ship some spied the boat,
And "Saved!" was the cry from many a throat.

And down to the boat they leaped and fell:
It turned as a bucket turns in a well,
And nothing was there but the surge and swell.

The Prince that was and the King to come,
There in an instant gone to his doom,

Despite of all England's bended knee
And maugre the Norman fealty!

He was a Prince of lust and pride;
He showed no grace till the hour he died.

When he should be King, he oft would vow,
He'd yoke the peasant to his own plough.
O'er him the ships score their furrows now.

God only knows where his soul did wake,
But I saw him die for his sister's sake.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(The sea hath no King but God alone.)

And now the end came o'er the waters' womb
Like the last great Day that's yet to come.

With prayers in vain and curses in vain,
The White Ship sundered on the mid-main:

And what were men and what was a ship
Were toys and splinters in the sea's grip.

I Berold was down in the sea ;
And passing strange though the thing may be,
Of dreams then known I remember me.

Blithe is the shout on Harfleur's strand
When morning lights the sails to land :

And blithe is Honfleur's echoing gloam
When mothers call the children home :

And high do the bells of Rouen beat
When the Body of Christ goes down the street.

These things and the like were heard and shown
In a moment's trance 'neath the sea alone ;

And when I rose, 'twas the sea did seem,
And not these things, to be all a dream.

The ship was gone and the crowd was gone,
And the deep shuddered and the moon shone,

And in a strait grasp my arms did span
The mainyard rent from the mast where it ran ;
And on it with me was another man.

Where lands were none 'neath the dim sea-sky,
We told our names, that man and I.

" O I am Godefroy de l'Aigle hight,
And son I am to a belted knight."

" And I am Berold the butcher's son
Who slays the beasts in Rouen town."

Then cried we upon God's name, as we
Did drift on the bitter winter sea.

But lo ! a third man rose o'er the wave,
And we said, " Thank God ! us three may He save ! "

He clutched to the yard with panting stare,
And we looked and knew Fitz-Stephen there.

He clung, and " What of the Prince ? " quoth he.
" Lost, lost ! " we cried. He cried, " Woe on me ! "
And loosed his hold and sank through the sea.

And soul with soul again in that space
We two were together face to face :

And each knew each, as the moments sped,
Less for one living than for one dead :

And every still star overhead
Seemed an eye that knew we were but dead.

And the hours passed ; till the noble's son
Sighed, " God be thy help ! my strength's foredone !

"O farewell, friend, for I can no more!"
"Christ take thee!" I moaned; and his life was o'er.

Three hundred souls were all lost but one,
And I drifted over the sea alone.

At last the morning rose on the sea
Like an angel's wing that beat tow'ards me.

Sore numbed I was in my sheepskin coat;
Half dead I hung, and might nothing note,
Till I woke sun-warmed in a fisher-boat.

The sun was high o'er the eastern brim
As I praised God and gave thanks to Him.

That day I told my tale to a priest,
Who charged me, till the shrift were releas'd,
That I should keep it in mine own breast.

And with the priest I thence did fare
To King Henry's court at Winchester.

We spoke with the King's high chamberlain,
And he wept and mourned again and again,
As if his own son had been slain:

And round us ever there crowded fast
Great men with faces all aghast:

And who so bold that might tell the thing
Which now they knew to their lord the King?
Much woe I learnt in their communing.

The King had watched with a heart sore stirred
For two whole days, and this was the third:

And still to all his court would he say,
"What keeps my son so long away?"

And they said: "The ports lie far and wide
That skirt the swell of the English tide;

"And England's cliffs are not more white
Than her women are, and scarce so light
Her skies as their eyes are blue and bright;

"And in some port that he reached from France
The Prince has lingered for his pleasaunce."

But once the King asked: "What distant cry
Was that we heard 'twixt the sea and sky?"

And one said: "With suchlike shouts, pardie!
Do the fishers fling their nets at sea."

And one: "Who knows not the shrieking quest
When the sea-mew misses its young from the nest?"

'Twas thus till now they had soothed his dread,
Albeit they knew not what they said:

But who should speak to-day of the thing
That all knew there except the King ?

Then pondering much they found a way,
And met round the King's high seat that day :

And the King sat with a heart sore stirred,
And seldom he spoke and seldom heard.

'Twas then through the hall the King was 'ware
Of a little boy with golden hair,

As bright as the golden poppy is
That the beach breeds for the surf to kiss :

Yet pale his cheek as the thorn in Spring,
And his garb black like the raven's wing.

Nothing heard but his foot through the hall,
For now the lords were silent all.

And the King wondered, and said, " Alack !
Who sends me a fair boy dressed in black ?

" Why, sweet heart, do you pace through the hall
As though my court were a funeral ? "

Then lowly knelt the child at the dais,
And looked up weeping in the King's face.

" O wherefore black, O King, ye may say,
For white is the hue of death to-day.

" Your son and all his fellowship
Lie low in the sea with the White Ship."

King Henry fell as a man struck dead ;
And speechless still he stared from his bed
When to him next day my rede I read.

There's many an hour must needs beguile
A King's high heart that he should smile,—

Full many a lordly hour, full fain
Of his realm's rule and pride of his reign :—

But this King never smiled again.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.

(Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.)

'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.

(The sea hath no King but God alone.)

THE KING'S TRAGEDY

JAMES I. OF SCOTS.—20TH FEBRUARY 1437

NOTE

Tradition says that Catherine Douglas, in honour of her heroic act when she barred the door with her arm against the murderers of James the First of Scots, received popularly the name of "Barlass." This name remains to her descendants, the Barlas family, in Scotland, who bear for their crest a broken arm. She married Alexander Lovell of Bolunnie.

A few stanzas from King James's lovely poem, known as *The King's Quair*, are quoted in the course of this ballad. The writer must express regret for the necessity which has compelled him to shorten the ten-syllabled lines to eight syllables, in order that they might harmonise with the ballad metre.

I CATHERINE am a Douglas born,
A name to all Scots dear;
And Kate Barlass they've called me now
Through many a waning year.

This old arm's withered now. 'Twas once
Most deft 'mong maidens all
To rein the steed, to wing the shaft,
To smite the palm-play ball.

In hall adown the close-linked dance
It has shone most white and fair;
It has been the rest for a true lord's head,
And many a sweet babe's nursing-bed,
And the bar to a King's chambère.

Aye, lasses, draw round Kate Barlass,
And hark with bated breath
How good King James, King Robert's son,
Was foully done to death.

Through all the days of his gallant youth
The princely James was pent,
By his friends at first and then by his foes,
In long imprisonment.

For the elder Prince, the kingdom's heir,
By treason's murderous brood
Was slain; and the father quaked for the child
With the royal mortal blood.

I' the Bass Rock fort, by his father's care,
Was his childhood's life assured;
And Henry the subtle Bolingbroke,
Proud England's King, 'neath the southron yoke
His youth for long years immured.

Yet in all things meet for a kingly man
Himself did he approve ;
And the nightingale through his prison-wall
Taught him both lore and love.

For once, when the bird's song drew him close
To the opened window-pane,
In her bower beneath a lady stood,
A light of life to his sorrowful mood,
Like a lily amid the rain.

And for her sake, to the sweet bird's note,
He framed a sweeter Song,
More sweet than ever a poet's heart
Gave yet to the English tongue.

She was a lady of royal blood ;
And when, past sorrow and teen,
He stood where still through his crownless years
His Scottish realm had been,
At Scone were the happy lovers crowned,
A heart-wed King and Queen.

But the bird may fall from the bough of youth,
And song be turned to moan,
And Love's storm-cloud be the shadow of Hate,
When the tempest-waves of a troubled State
Are beating against a throne.

Yet well they loved ; and the god of Love,
Whom well the King had sung,
Might find on the earth no truer hearts
His lowliest swains among.

From the days when first she rode abroad
With Scottish maids in her train,
I Catherine Douglas won the trust
Of my mistress sweet Queen Jane.

And oft she sighed, " To be born a King ! "
And oft along the way
When she saw the homely lovers pass
She has said, " Alack the day ! "

Years waned,—the loving and toiling years :
Till England's wrong renewed
Drove James, by outrage cast on his crown,
To the open field of feud.

'Twas when the King and his host were met
At the leaguer of Roxbro' hold,
The Queen o' the sudden sought his camp
With a tale of dread to be told.

And she showed him a secret letter writ
That spoke of treasonous strife,
And how a band of his noblest lords
Were sworn to take his life.

"And it may be here or it may be there,
In the camp or the court," she said :
"But for my sake come to your people's arms
And guard your royal head."

Quoth he, "'Tis the fifteenth day of the siege,
And the castle's nigh to yield."
"O face your foes on your throne," she cried,
"And show the power you wield ;
And under your Scottish people's love
You shall sit as under your shield."

At the fair Queen's side I stood that day
When he bade them raise the siege,
And back to his Court he sped to know
How the lords would meet their Liege.

But when he summoned his Parliament,
The louring brows hung round,
Like clouds that circle the mountain-head
Ere the first low thunders sound.

For he had tamed the nobles' lust
And curbed their power and pride,
And reached out an arm to right the poor
Through Scotland far and wide ;
And many a lordly wrong-doer
By the headsman's axe had died.

'Twas then upspoke Sir Robert Græme,
The bold o'ermastering man :—
"O King, in the name of your Three Estates
I set you under their ban !

"For, as your lords made oath to you
Of service and fealty,
Even in like wise you pledged your oath
Their faithful sire to be :—

"Yet all we here that are nobly sprung
Have mourned dear kith and kin
Since first for the Scottish Barons' curse
Did your bloody rule begin."

With that he laid his hands on his King :—
"Is this not so, my lords ?"
But of all who had sworn to league with him
Not one spake back to his words.

Quoth the King :—"Thou speak'st but for one Estate,
Nor doth it avow thy gage.
Let my liege lords hale this traitor hence !"
The Græme fired dark with rage :—
"Who works for lesser men than himself,
He earns but a witless wage !"

But soon from the dungeon where he lay
He won by privy plots,
And forth he fled with a price on his head
To the country of the Wild Scots.

And word there came from Sir Robert Græme
 To the King at Edinbro':—
 "No Liege of mine thou art; but I see
 From this day forth alone in thee
 God's creature, my mortal foe.

"Through thee are my wife and children lost,
 My heritage and lands;
 And when my God shall show me a way,
 Thyself my mortal foe will I slay
 With these my proper hands."

Against the coming of Christmastide
 That year the King bade call
 I' the Black Friars' Charterhouse of Perth
 A solemn festival.

And we of his household rode with him
 In a close-ranked company;
 But not till the sun had sunk from his throne
 Did we reach the Scottish Sea.

That eve was clenched for a boding storm,
 'Neath a toilsome moon half seen;
 The cloud stooped low and the surf rose high;
 And where there was a line of the sky,
 Wild wings loomed dark between.

And on a rock of the black beach-side,
 By the veiled moon dimly lit,
 There was something seemed to heave with life
 As the King drew nigh to it.

And was it only the tossing furze
 Or brake of the waste sea-wold?
 Or was it an eagle bent to the blast?
 When near we came, we knew it at last
 For a woman tattered and old.

But it seemed as though by a fire within
 Her writhen limbs were wrung;
 And as soon as the King was close to her,
 She stood up gaunt and strong.

'Twas then the moon sailed clear of the rack
 On high in her hollow dome;
 And still as aloft with hoary crest
 Each clamorous wave rang home,
 Like fire in snow the moonlight blazed
 Amid the champing foam.

And the woman held his eyes with her eyes:—
 "O King, thou art come at last;
 But thy wraith has haunted the Scottish Sea
 To my sight for four years past.

"Four years it is since first I met,
 'Twixt the Duchray and the Dhu,
 A shape whose feet clung close in a shroud,
 And that shape for thine I knew.

"A year again, and on Inchkeith Isle
I saw thee pass in the breeze,
With the cerecloth risen above thy feet
And wound about thy knees.

"And yet a year, in the Links of Forth,
As a wanderer without rest,
Thou cam'st with both thine arms i' the shroud
That clung high up thy breast.

"And in this hour I find thee here,
And well mine eyes may note
That the winding-sheet hath passed thy breast
And risen around thy throat.

"And when I meet thee again, O King,
That of death hast such sore drouth,—
Except thou turn again on this shore,—
The winding-sheet shall have moved once more
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

"O King, whom poor men bless for their King,
Of thy fate be not so fain;
But these my words for God's message take,
And turn thy steed, O King, for her sake
Who rides beside thy rein!"

While the woman spoke, the King's horse reared
As if it would breast the sea,
And the Queen turned pale as she heard on the gale
The voice die dolorously.

When the woman ceased, the steed was still,
But the King gazed on her yet,
And in silence save for the wail of the sea
His eyes and her eyes met.

At last he said:—"God's ways are His own;
Man is but shadow and dust.
Last night I prayed by His altar-stone;
To-night I wend to the Feast of His Son;
And in Him I set my trust.

"I have held my people in sacred charge,
And have not feared the sting
Of proud men's hate,—to His will resign'd
Who has but one same death for a hind
And one same death for a King.

"And if God in His wisdom have brought close
The day when I must die,
That day by water or fire or air
My feet shall fall in the destined snare
Wherever my road may lie.

"What man can say but the Fiend hath set
Thy sorcery on my path,
My heart with the fear of death to fill,
And turn me against God's very will
To sink in His burning wrath?"

The woman stood as the train rode past,
And moved nor limb nor eye ;
And when we were shipped, we saw her there
Still standing against the sky.

As the ship made way, the moon once more
Sank slow in her rising pall ;
And I thought of the shrouded wraith of the King,
And I said, " The Heavens know all."

And now, ye lasses, must ye hear
How my name is Kate Barlass :—
But a little thing, when all the tale
Is told of the weary mass
Of crime and woe which in Scotland's realm
God's will let come to pass.

'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth
That the King and all his Court
Were met, the Christmas Feast being done,
For solace and disport.

'Twas a wind-wild eve in February,
And against the casement-pane
The branches smote like summoning hands,
And muttered the driving rain.

And when the wind swooped over the lift
And made the whole heaven frown,
It seemed a grip was laid on the walls
To tug the housetop down.

And the Queen was there, more stately fair
Than a lily in garden set ;
And the King was loth to stir from her side ;
For as on the day when she was his bride,
Even so he loved her yet.

And the Earl of Athole, the King's false friend,
Sat with him at the board ;
And Robert Stuart the chamberlain
Who had sold his sovereign Lord.

Yet the traitor Christopher Chaumber there
Would fain have told him all,
And vainly four times that night he strove
To reach the King through the hall.

But the wine is bright at the goblet's brim
Though the poison lurk beneath ;
And the apples still are red on the tree
Within whose shade may the adder be
That shall turn thy life to death.

There was a knight of the King's fast friends
Whom he called the King of Love ;
And to such bright cheer and courtesy
That name might best behave.

And the King and Queen both loved him well
For his gentle knightliness ;
And with him the King, as that eve wore on,
Was playing at the chess.

And the King said, (for he thought to jest
And soothe the Queen thereby ;)—
“ In a book 'tis writ that this same year
A King shall in Scotland die.

“ And I have pondered the matter o'er,
And this have I found, Sir Hugh,—
There are but two Kings on Scottish ground,
And those Kings are I and you.

“ And I have a wife and a newborn heir,
And you are yourself alone ;
So stand you stark at my side with me
To guard our double throne.

“ For here sit I and my wife and child,
As well your heart shall approve,
In full surrender and soothfastness,
Beneath your Kingdom of Love.”

And the Knight laughed, and the Queen too smiled ;
But I knew her heavy thought,
And I strove to find in the good King's jest
What cheer might thence be wrought.

And I said, “ My Liege, for the Queen's dear love
Now sing the song that of old
You made, when a captive Prince you lay,
And the nightingale sang sweet on the spray,
In Windsor's castle-hold.”

Then he smiled the smile I knew so well
When he thought to please the Queen ;
The smile which under all bitter frowns
Of fate that rose between
For ever dwelt at the poet's heart
Like the bird of love unseen.

And he kissed her hand and took his harp,
And the music sweetly rang ;
And when the song burst forth, it seemed
'Twas the nightingale that sang.

“ *Worship, ye lovers, on this May :
Of bliss your kalends are begun :
Sing with us, Away, Winter, away !
Come, Summer, the sweet season and sun !
Awake for shame,—your heaven is won,—
And amorously your heads lift all :
Thank Love, that you to his grace doth call !*”

But when he bent to the Queen, and sang
The speech whose praise was hers,
It seemed his voice was the voice of the Spring
And the voice of the bygone years.

*"The fairest and the freshest flower
That ever I saw before that hour,
The which o' the sudden made to start
The blood of my body to my heart.*

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*Ah sweet, are ye a worldly creature
Or heavenly thing in form of nature?"*

And the song was long, and richly stored
With wonder and beauteous things;
And the harp was tuned to every change
Of minstrel ministerings;
But when he spoke of the Queen at the last,
Its strings were his own heart-strings.

*"Unworthy but only of her grace,
Upon Love's rock that's easy and sure,
In guerdon of all my lovè's space
She took me her humble creature.
Thus fell my blissful aventure
In youth of love that from day to day
Flowereth aye new, and further I say.*

*"To reckon all the circumstance
As it happed when lessen gan my sore,
Of my rancour and woful chance,
It were too long,—I have done therefor.
And of this flower I say no more,
But unto my help her heart hath tended
And even from death her man defended."*

*"Aye, even from death," to myself I said;
For I thought of the day when she
Had borne him the news, at Roxbro' siege,
Of the fell confederacy.*

But Death even then took aim as he sang
With an arrow deadly bright;
And the grinning skull lurked grimly aloof,
And the wings were spread far over the roof
More dark than the winter night.

Yet truly along the amorous song
Of Love's high pomp and state,
There were words of Fortune's trackless doom
And the dreadful face of Fate.

And oft have I heard again in dreams
The voice of dire appeal
In which the King then sang of the pit
That is under Fortune's wheel.

*"And under the wheel beheld I there
An ugly Pit as deep as hell,
That to behold I quaked for fear:
And this I heard, that who therein fell
Came no more up, tidings to tell:
Whereat, astound of the fearful sight,
I wist not what to do for fright."*

And oft has my thought called up again
These words of the changeful song :—
*"Wist thou thy pain and thy travail
To come, well might'st thou weep and wail!"*
And our wail, O God! is long.

But the song's end was all of his love;
And well his heart was grac'd
With her smiling lips and her tear-bright eyes
As his arm went round her waist.

And on the swell of her long fair throat
Close clung the necklet-chain
As he bent her pearl-tir'd head aside,
And in the warmth of his love and pride
He kissed her lips full fain.

And her true face was a rosy red,
The very red of the rose
That, couched on the happy garden-bed,
In the summer sunlight glows.

And all the wondrous things of love
That sang so sweet through the song
Were in the look that met in their eyes,
And the look was deep and long.

'Twas then a knock came at the outer gate,
And the usher sought the King.
"The woman you met by the Scottish Sea,
My Liege, would tell you a thing;
And she says that her present need for speech
Will bear no gainsaying."

And the King said: "The hour is late;
To-morrow will serve, I ween."
Then he charged the usher strictly, and said:
"No word of this to the Queen."

But the usher came again to the King.
"Shall I call her back?" quoth he:
"For as she went on her way, she cried,
'Woe! Woe! then the thing must be!'"

And the King paused, but he did not speak.
Then he called for the Voidee-cup:
And as we heard the twelfth hour strike,
There by true lips and false lips alike
Was the draught of trust drained up.

So with reverence meet to King and Queen,
To bed went all from the board;
And the last to leave of the courtly train
Was Robert Stuart the chamberlain
Who had sold his sovereign lord.

And all the locks of the chamber-door
Had the traitor riven and brast;
And that Fate might win sure way from afar,
He had drawn out every bolt and bar
That made the entrance fast.

And now at midnight he stole his way
To the moat of the outer wall,
And laid strong hurdles closely across
Where the traitors' tread should fall.

But we that were the Queen's bower-maids
Alone were left behind ;
And with heed we drew the curtains close
Against the winter wind.

And now that all was still through the hall,
More clearly we heard the rain
That clamoured ever against the glass
And the boughs that beat on the pane.

But the fire was bright in the ingle-nook,
And through empty space around
The shadows cast on the arras'd wall
'Mid the pictured kings stood sudden and tall
Like spectres sprung from the ground.

And the bed was dight in a deep alcove ;
And as he stood by the fire
The King was still in talk with the Queen
While he doffed his goodly attire.

And the song had brought the image back
Of many a bygone year ;
And many a loving word they said
With hand in hand and head laid to head ;
And none of us went anear.

But Love was weeping outside the house,
A child in the piteous rain ;
And as he watched the arrow of Death,
He wailed for his own shafts close in the sheath
That never should fly again.

And now beneath the window arose
A wild voice suddenly :
And the King reared straight, but the Queen fell back
As for bitter dule to dree ;
And all of us knew the woman's voice
Who spoke by the Scottish Sea.

" O King," she cried, " in an evil hour
They drove me from thy gate ;
And yet my voice must rise to thine ears ;
But alas ! it comes too late !

" Last night at mid-watch, by Aberdour,
When the moon was dead in the skies,
O King, in a death-light of thine own
I saw thy shape arise.

" And in full season, as erst I said,
The doom had gained its growth ;
And the shroud had risen above thy neck
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

"And no moon woke, but the pale dawn broke,
And still thy soul stood there ;
And I thought its silence cried to my soul
As the first rays crowned its hair.

"Since then have I journeyed fast and fain
In very despite of Fate,
Lest Hope might still be found in God's will :
But they drove me from thy gate.

"For every man on God's ground, O King,
His death grows up from his birth
In a shadow-plant perpetually ;
And thine towers high, a black yew-tree,
O'er the Charterhouse of Perth !"

That room was built far out from the house ;
And none but we in the room
Might hear the voice that rose beneath,
Nor the tread of the coming doom.

For now there came a torchlight-glare,
And a clang of arms there came ;
And not a soul in that space but thought
Of the foe Sir Robert Græme.

Yea, from the country of the Wild Scots,
O'er mountain, valley, and glen,
He had brought with him in murderous league
Three hundred armed men.

The King knew all in an instant's flash ;
And like a King did he stand ;
But there was no armour in all the room,
Nor weapon lay to his hand.

And all we women flew to the door
And thought to have made it fast ;
But the bolts were gone and the bars were gone
And the locks were riven and brast.

And he caught the pale pale Queen in his arms
As the iron footsteps fell,—
Then loosed her, standing alone, and said,
"Our bliss was our farewell !"

And 'twixt his lips he murmured a prayer,
And he crossed his brow and breast ;
And proudly in royal hardihood
Even so with folded arms he stood,—
The prize of the bloody quest.

Then on me leaped the Queen like a deer :—
"O Catherine, help !" she cried.
And low at his feet we clasped his knees
Together side by side.
"Oh ! even a King, for his people's sake,
From treasonous death must hide !"

"For *her* sake most!" I cried, and I marked
 The pang that my words could wring.
 And the iron tongs from the chimney-nook
 I snatched and held to the king:—
 "Wrench up the plank! and the vault beneath
 Shall yield safe harbouring."

With brows low-bent, from my eager hand
 The heavy heft did he take;
 And the plank at his feet he wrenched and tore;
 And as he frowned through the open floor,
 Again I said, "For her sake!"

Then he cried to the Queen, "God's will be done!"
 For her hands were clasped in prayer.
 And down he sprang to the inner crypt;
 And straight we closed the plank he had ripp'd
 And toiled to smooth it fair.

(Alas! in that vault a gap once was
 Where thro' the King might have fled:
 But three days since close-walled had it been
 By his will; for the ball would roll therein
 When without at the palm he play'd.)

Then the Queen cried, "Catherine, keep the door,
 And I to this will suffice!"
 At her word I rose all dazed to my feet,
 And my heart was fire and ice.

And louder ever the voices grew,
 And the tramp of men in mail;
 Until to my brain it seemed to be
 As though I tossed on a ship at sea
 In the teeth of a crashing gale.

Then back I flew to the rest; and hard
 We strove with sinews knit
 To force the table against the door;
 But we might not compass it.

Then my wild gaze sped far down the hall
 To the place of the hearthstone-sill;
 And the Queen bent ever above the floor,
 For the plank was rising still.

And now the rush was heard on the stair,
 And "God, what help?" was our cry.
 And was I frenzied or was I bold?
 I looked at each empty stanchion-hold,
 And no bar but my arm had I!

Like iron felt my arm, as through
 The staple I made it pass:—
 Alack! it was flesh and bone—no more!
 'Twas Catherine Douglas sprang to the door,
 But I fell back Kate Barlass.

With that they all thronged into the hall,
 Half dim to my failing ken;
 And the space that was but a void before
 Was a crowd of wrathful men.

Behind the door I had fall'n and lay,
Yet my sense was wildly aware,
And for all the pain of my shattered arm
I never fainted there.

Even as I fell, my eyes were cast
Where the King leaped down to the pit;
And lo! the plank was smooth in its place,
And the Queen stood far from it.

And under the litters and through the bed
And within the presses all
The traitors sought for the King, and pierced
The arras around the wall.

And through the chamber they ramped and stormed
Like lions loose in the lair,
And scarce could trust to their very eyes,—
For behold! no King was there.

Then one of them seized the Queen, and cried,—
“Now tell us, where is thy lord?”
And he held the sharp point over her heart:
She drooped not her eyes nor did she start,
But she answered never a word.

Then the sword half pierced the true true breast:
But it was the Græme's own son
Cried, “This is a woman,—we seek a man!”
And away from her girdle-zone
He struck the point of the murderous steel;
And that foul deed was not done.

And forth flowed all the throng like a sea
And 'twas empty space once more;
And my eyes sought out the wounded Queen
As I lay behind the door.

And I said: “Dear Lady, leave me here,
For I cannot help you now:
But fly while you may, and none shall reck
Of my place here lying low.”

And she said, “My Catherine, God help thee!”
Then she looked to the distant floor,
And clasping her hands, “O God help *him*,”
She sobbed, “for we can no more!”

But God He knows what help may mean,
If it mean to live or to die;
And what sore sorrow and mighty moan
On earth it may cost ere yet a throne
Be filled in His house on high.

And now the ladies fled with the Queen;
And through the open door
The night-wind wailed round the empty room
And the rushes shook on the floor.

And the bed drooped low in the dark recess
Whence the arras was rent away ;
And the firelight still shone over the space
Where our hidden secret lay.

And the rain had ceased, and the moonbeams lit
The window high in the wall,—
Bright beams that on the plank that I knew
Through the painted pane did fall,
And gleamed with the splendour of Scotland's crown
And shield armorial.

But then a great wind swept up the skies
And the climbing moon fell back ;
And the royal blazon fled from the floor,
And nought remained on its track ;
And high in the darkened window-pane
The shield and the crown were black.

And what I say next I partly saw
And partly I heard in sooth,
And partly since from the murderers' lips
The torture wrung the truth.

For now again came the armèd tread,
And fast through the hall it fell ;
But the throng was less ; and ere I saw,
By the voice without I could tell
That Robert Stuart had come with them
Who knew that chamber well.

And over the space the Græme strode dark
With his mantle round him flung ;
And in his eye was a flaming light
But not a word on his tongue.

And Stuart held a torch to the floor,
And he found the thing he sought ;
And they slashed the plank away with their swords ;
And O God ! I fainted not !

And the traitor held his torch in the gap,
All smoking and smouldering ;
And through the vapour and fire, beneath
In the dark crypt's narrow ring,
With a shout that pealed to the room's high roof
They saw their naked King.

Half naked he stood, but stood as one
Who yet could do and dare :
With the crown, the King was stript away,—
The Knight was 'reft of his battle-array,—
But still the Man was there.

From the rout then stepped a villain forth,—
Sir John Hall was his name ;
With a knife unsheathed he leapt to the vault
Beneath the torchlight-flame.

Of his person and stature was the King
A man right manly strong,
And mightily by the shoulder-blades
His foe to his feet he flung.

Then the traitor's brother, Sir Thomas Hall,
Sprang down to work his worst;
And the King caught the second man by the neck
And flung him above the first.

And he smote and trampled them under him;
And a long month thence they bare
All black their throats with the grip of his hands
When the hangman's hand came there.

And sore he strove to have had their knives,
But the sharp blades gashed his hands.
Oh James! so armed, thou hadst battled there
Till help had come of thy bands;
And oh! once more thou hadst held our throne
And ruled thy Scottish lands!

But while the King o'er his foes still raged
With a heart that nought could tame,
Another man sprang down to the crypt;
And with his sword in his hand hard-gripp'd,
There stood Sir Robert Græme.

(Now shame on the recreant traitor's heart
Who durst not face his King
Till the body unarmed was wearied out
With two-fold combating!

Ah! well might the people sing and say,
As oft ye have heard aright:—
“O Robert Græme, O Robert Græme,
Who slew our King, God give thee shame!”
For he slew him not as a knight.)

And the naked King turned round at bay,
But his strength had passed the goal,
And he could but gasp:—“Mine hour is come;
But oh! to succour thine own soul's doom,
Let a priest now shrive my soul!”

And the traitor looked on the King's spent strength,
And said:—“Have I kept my word?—
Yea, King, the mortal pledge that I gave?
No black friar's shrift thy soul shall have,
But the shrift of this red sword!”

With that he smote his King through the breast;
And all they three in that pen
Fell on him and stabbed and stabbed him there
Like merciless murderous men.

Yet seemed it now that Sir Robert Græme,
Ere the King's last breath was o'er,
Turned sick at heart with the deadly sight
And would have done no more.

But a cry came from the troop above :—
 “ If him thou do not slay,
 The price of his life that thou dost spare
 Thy forfeit life shall pay ! ”

O God ! what more did I hear or see,
 Or how should I tell the rest ?
 But there at length our King lay slain
 With sixteen wounds in his breast.

O God ! and now did a bell boom forth,
 And the murderers turned and fled ;—
 Too late, too late, O God, did it sound !—
 And I heard the true men mustering round,
 And the cries and the coming tread.

But ere they came, to the black death-gap
 Somewise did I creep and steal ;
 And lo ! or ever I swooned away,
 Through the dusk I saw where the white face lay
 In the Pit of Fortune's Wheel.

And now, ye Scottish maids who have heard
 Dread things of the days grown old,—
 Even at the last, of true Queen Jane
 May somewhat yet be told,
 And how she dealt for her dear lord's sake
 Dire vengeance manifold.

'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth,
 In the fair-lit Death-chapelle,
 That the slain King's corpse on bier was laid
 With chaunt and requiem-knell.

And all with royal wealth of balm
 Was the body purified ;
 And none could trace on the brow and lips
 The death that he had died.

In his robes of state he lay asleep
 With orb and sceptre in hand ;
 And by the crown he wore on his throne
 Was his kingly forehead spann'd.

And, girls, 'twas a sweet sad thing to see
 How the curling golden hair,
 As in the day of the poet's youth,
 From the King's crown clustered there.

And if all had come to pass in the brain
 That throbbed beneath those curls,
 Then Scots had said in the days to come
 That this their soil was a different home
 And a different Scotland, girls !

And the Queen sat by him night and day,
 And oft she knelt in prayer,
 All wan and pale in the widow's veil
 That shrouded her shining hair.

And I had got good help of my hurt :
And only to me some sign
She made ; and save the priests that were there,
No face would she see but mine.

And the month of March wore on apace ;
And now fresh couriers fared
Still from the country of the Wild Scots
With news of the traitors snared.

And still as I told her day by day,
Her pallor changed to sight,
And the frost grew to a furnace-flame
That burnt her visage white.

And evermore as I brought her word,
She bent to her dead King James,
And in the cold ear with fire-drawn breath
She spoke the traitors' names.

But when the name of Sir Robert Græme
Was the one she had to give,
I ran to hold her up from the floor ;
For the froth was on her lips, and sore
I feared that she could not live.

And the month of March wore nigh to its end,
And still was the death-pall spread ;
For she would not bury her slaughtered lord
Till his slayers all were dead.

And now of their dooms dread tidings came,
And of torments fierce and dire ;
And nought she spake,—she had ceased to speak,—
But her eyes were a soul on fire.

But when I told her the bitter end
Of the stern and just award,
She leaned o'er the bier, and thrice three times
She kissed the lips of her lord.

And then she said,—“ My King, they are dead ! ”
And she knelt on the chapel-floor,
And whispered low with a strange proud smile,—
“ James, James, they suffered more ! ”

Last she stood up to her queenly height,
But she shook like an autumn leaf,
As though the fire wherein she burned
Then left her body, and all were turned
To winter of life-long grief.

And “ O James ! ” she said,—“ My James ! ” she said,—
“ Alas for the woful thing,
That a poet true and a friend of man,
In desperate days of bale and ban,
Should needs be born a King ! ”

II.—MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

SHE fell asleep on Christmas Eve :
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweigh'd
The pain nought else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare
Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
Of winter radiance sheer and thin ;
The hollow halo it was in
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound
Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and blank ;
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years
Heard in each hour, crept off ; and then
The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat :
Her needles, as she laid them down,
Met lightly, and her silken gown
Settled : no other noise than that.

"Glory unto the Newly Born !"
So, as said angels, she did say ;
Because we were in Christmas Day,
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us
 There was a pushing back of chairs,
 As some who had sat unawares
 So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste
 Our mother went where Margaret lay,
 Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they
 Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned;
 But suddenly turned back again;
 And all her features seemed in pain
 With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
 And held my breath, and spoke no word:
 There was none spoken; but I heard
 The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept:
 And both my arms fell, and I said,
 "God knows I knew that she was dead."
 And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
 A little after twelve o'clock,
 We said, ere the first quarter struck,
 "Christ's blessing on the newly born!"

FOR

AN ANNUNCIATION

EARLY GERMAN

THE lilies stand before her like a screen
 Through which, upon this warm and solemn day,
 God surely hears. For there she kneels to pray
 Who wafts our prayers to God—Mary the Queen
 She was Faith's Present, parting what had been
 From what began with her, and is for aye.
 On either hand, God's twofold system lay:
 With meek bowed face a Virgin prayed between.

So prays she, and the Dove flies in to her,
 And she has turned. At the low porch is one
 Who looks as though deep awe made him to smile.
 Heavy with heat, the plants yield shadow there;
 The loud flies cross each other in the sun;
 And the aisled pillars meet the poplar-aisle.

AVE

MOTHER of the Fair Delight,
 Thou handmaid perfect in God's sight,
 Now sitting fourth beside the Three,
 Thyself a woman-Trinity,—
 Being a daughter born to God,
 Mother of Christ from stall to rood,
 And wife unto the Holy Ghost:—
 Oh when our need is uttermost,
 Think that to such as death may strike
 Thou once wert sister sisterlike!
 Thou headstone of humanity,
 Groundstone of the great Mystery,
 Fashioned like us, yet more than we!

Mind'st thou not (when June's heavy breath
 Warmed the long days in Nazareth,)
 That eve thou didst go forth to give
 Thy flowers some drink that they might live
 One faint night more amid the sands?
 Far off the trees were as pale wands
 Against the fervid sky: the sea
 Sighed further off eternally
 As human sorrow sighs in sleep.
 Then suddenly the awe grew deep,
 As of a day to which all days
 Were footsteps in God's secret ways:
 Until a folding sense, like prayer,
 Which is, as God is, everywhere,
 Gathered about thee; and a voice
 Spake to thee without any noise,
 Being of the silence:—"Hail," it said,
 "Thou that art highly favoured;
 The Lord is with thee here and now;
 Blessed among all women thou."

Ah! knew'st thou of the end, when first
 That Babe was on thy bosom nurs'd?—
 Or when He tottered round thy knee
 Did thy great sorrow dawn on thee?—
 And through His boyhood, year by year
 Eating with Him the Passover,
 Didst thou discern confusedly
 That holier sacrament, when He,
 The bitter cup about to quaff,
 Should break the bread and eat thereof?—
 Or came not yet the knowledge, even
 Till on some day forecast in Heaven
 His feet passed through thy door to press
 Upon His Father's business?—
 Or still was God's high secret kept?

Nay, but I think the whisper crept
 Like growth through childhood. Work and play,
 Things common to the course of day,
 Awed thee with meanings unfulfill'd;
 And all through girlhood, something still'd
 Thy senses like the birth of light,
 When thou hast trimmed thy lamp at night

Or washed thy garments in the stream ;
 To whose white bed had come the dream
 That He was thine and thou wast His
 Who feeds among the field-lilies.
 O solemn shadow of the end
 In that wise spirit long contain'd !
 O awful end ! and those unsaid
 Long years when It was Finishèd !

Mind'st thou not (when the twilight gone
 Left darkness in the house of John,)
 Between the naked window-bars
 That spacious vigil of the stars ?—
 For thou, a watcher even as they,
 Wouldst rise from where throughout the day
 Thou wroughtest raiment for His poor ;
 And, finding the fixed terms endure
 Of day and night which never brought
 Sounds of His coming chariot,
 Wouldst lift through cloud-waste unexplor'd
 Those eyes which said, " How long, O Lord ? "
 Then that disciple whom He loved,
 Well heeding, haply would be moved
 To ask thy blessing in His name ;
 And that one thought in both, the same
 Though silent, then would clasp ye round
 To weep together,—tears long bound,
 Sick tears of patience, dumb and slow.
 Yet, " Surely I come quickly,"—so
 He said, from life and death gone home.
 Amen : even so, Lord Jesus, come !

But oh ! what human tongue can speak
 That day when Michael came * to break
 From the tir'd spirit, like a veil,
 Its covenant with Gabriel
 Endured at length unto the end ?
 What human thought can apprehend
 That mystery of motherhood
 When thy Beloved at length renew'd
 The sweet communion severèd,—
 His left hand underneath thine head
 And His right hand embracing thee ?—
 Lo ! He was thine, and this is He !

Soul, is it Faith, or Love, or Hope,
 That lets me see her standing up
 Where the light of the Throne is bright ?
 Unto the left, unto the right,
 The cherubim, succinct, conjoint,
 Float inward to a golden point,
 And from between the seraphim
 The glory issues for a hymn.
 O Mary Mother, be not loth
 To listen,—thou whom the stars clothe,
 Who seëst and mayst not be seen !
 Hear us at last, O Mary Queen !
 Into our shadow bend thy face,
 Bowing thee from the secret place,
 O Mary Virgin, full of grace !

* A Church legend of the Blessed Virgin's death.

THE PORTRAIT

THIS is her picture as she was :

It seems a thing to wonder on,
As though mine image in the glass
Should tarry when myself am gone.
I gaze until she seems to stir,—
Until mine eyes almost aver

That now, even now, the sweet lips part
To breathe the words of the sweet heart:—
And yet the earth is over her.

Alas ! even such the thin-drawn ray
That makes the prison-depths more rude,—
The drip of water night and day
Giving a tongue to solitude.
Yet only this, of love's whole prize,
Remains ; save what in mournful guise
Takes counsel with my soul alone,—
Save what is secret and unknown,
Below the earth, above the skies.

In painting her I shrined her face
'Mid mystic trees, where light falls in
Hardly at all ; a covert place
Where you might think to find a din
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame
Wandering, and many a shape whose name
Not itself knoweth, and old dew,
And your own footsteps meeting you,
And all things going as they came.

A deep dim wood ; and there she stands
As in that wood that day : for so
Was the still movement of her hands
And such the pure line's gracious flow.
And passing fair the type must seem,
Unknown the presence and the dream.
'Tis she : though of herself, alas !
Less than her shadow on the grass
Or than her image in the stream.

That day we met there, I and she
One with the other all alone ;
And we were blithe ; yet memory
Saddens those hours, as when the moon
Looks upon daylight. And with her
I stopped to drink the spring-water,
Athirst where other waters sprang :
And where the echo is, she sang,—
My soul another echo there.

But when that hour my soul won strength
For words whose silence wastes and kills,
Dull raindrops smote us, and at length
Thundered the heat within the hills.
That eve I spoke those words again
Beside the pelted window-pane ;
And there she hearkened what I said,
With under-glances that surveyed
The empty pastures blind with rain.

Next day the memories of these things,
Like leaves through which a bird has flown,
Still vibrated with Love's warm wings ;
Till I must make them all my own
And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease
Of talk and sweet long silences,
She stood among the plants in bloom
At windows of a summer room,
To feign the shadow of the trees.

And as I wrought, while all above
And all around was fragrant air,
In the sick burthen of my love
It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there
Beat like a heart among the leaves.
O heart that never beats nor heaves,
In that one darkness lying still,
What now to thee my love's great will
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves ?

For now doth daylight disavow
Those days—nought left to see or hear.
Only in solemn whispers now
At night-time these things reach mine ear ;
When the leaf-shadows at a breath
Shrink in the road, and all the heath,
Forest and water, far and wide,
In limpid starlight glorified,
Lie like the mystery of death.

Last night at last I could have slept,
And yet delayed my sleep till dawn,
Still wandering. Then it was I wept :
For unawares I came upon
Those glades where once she walked with me :
And as I stood there suddenly,
All wan with traversing the night,
Upon the desolate verge of light
Yearned loud the iron-bosomed sea.

Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears
The beating heart of Love's own breast,—
Where round the secret of all spheres
All angels lay their wings to rest,—
How shall my soul stand rapt and awed,
When, by the new birth borne abroad
Throughout the music of the suns,
It enters in her soul at once
And knows the silence there for God !

Here with her face doth memory sit
Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,
Till other eyes shall look from it,
Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
Even than the old gaze tenderer :
While hopes and aims long lost with her
Stand round her image side by side,
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulchre.

FOR

OUR LADY OF THE ROCKS

BY LEONARDO DA VINCI

MOTHER, is this the darkness of the end,
The Shadow of Death? and is that outer sea
Infinite imminent Eternity?
And does the death-pang by man's seed sustained
In Time's each instant cause thy face to bend
Its silent prayer upon the Son, while He
Blesses the dead with His hand silently
To His long day which hours no more offend?

Mother of grace, the pass is difficult,
Keen as these rocks, and the bewildered souls
Throng it like echoes, blindly shuddering through.
Thy name, O Lord, each spirit's voice extols,
Whose peace abides in the dark avenue
Amid the bitterness of things occult.

AT THE SUN-RISE IN 1848

God said, Let there be light; and there was light.
Then heard we sounds as though the Earth did sing
And the Earth's angel cried upon the wing:
We saw priests fall together and turn white:
And covered in the dust from the sun's sight,
A king was spied, and yet another king.
We said: "The round world keeps its balancing;
On this globe, they and we are opposite,—
If it is day with us, with them 'tis night."
Still, Man, in thy just pride, remember this:—
Thou hadst not made that thy sons' sons shall ask
What the word *king* may mean in their day's task,
But for the light that led: and if light is,
It is because God said, Let there be light.

AUTUMN SONG

KNOW'ST thou not at the fall of the leaf
 How the heart feels a languid grief
 Laid on it for a covering,
 And how sleep seems a goodly thing
 In Autumn at the fall of the leaf?

And how the swift beat of the brain
 Falters because it is in vain,
 In Autumn at the fall of the leaf
 Knowest thou not? and how the chief
 Of joys seems—not to suffer pain?

Know'st thou not at the fall of the leaf
 How the soul feels like a dried sheaf
 Bound up at length for harvesting,
 And how death seems a comely thing
 In Autumn at the fall of the leaf?

THE LADY'S LAMENT

NEVER happy any more!
 Aye, turn the saying o'er and o'er,
 It says but what it said before,
 And heart and life are just as sore.
 The wet leaves blow aslant the floor
 In the rain through the open door.
 No, no more.

Never happy any more!
 The eyes are weary and give o'er,
 But still the soul weeps as before.
 And always must each one deplore
 Each once, nor bear what others bore?
 This is now as it was of yore.
 No, no more.

Never happy any more!
 Is it not but a sorry lore
 That says, "Take strength, the worst is o'er"?
 Shall the stars seem as heretofore?
 The day wears on more and more—
 While I was weeping the day wore.
 No, no more.

Never happy any more !
 In the cold behind the door
 That was the dial striking four :
 One for joy the past hours bore,
 Two for hope and will cast o'er,
 One for the naked dark before.
 No, no more.

Never happy any more !
 Put the light out, shut the door,
 Sweep the wet leaves from the floor.
 Even thus Fate's hand has swept her floor,
 Even thus Love's hand has shut the door
 Through which his warm feet passed of yore.
 Shall it be opened any more ?
 No, no, no more.

MARY'S GIRLHOOD

(For a Picture)

I

THIS is that blessed Mary, pre-elect
 God's Virgin. Gone is a great while, and she
 Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee.
 Unto God's will she brought devout respect,
 Profound simplicity of intellect,
 And supreme patience. From her mother's knee
 Faithful and hopeful ; wise in charity ;
 Strong in grave peace ; in pity circumspect.

So held she through her girlhood ; as it were
 An angel-watered lily, that near God
 Grows and is quiet. Till, one dawn at home
 She woke in her white bed, and had no fear
 At all,—yet wept till sunshine, and felt awed :
 Because the fulness of the time was come.

II

THESE are the symbols. On that cloth of red
 I' the centre is the Tripoint : perfect each,
 Except the second of its points, to teach
 That Christ is not yet born. The books—whose head
 Is golden Charity, as Paul hath said—
 Those virtues are wherein the soul is rich :
 Therefore on them the lily standeth, which
 Is Innocence, being interpreted.

The seven-thorn'd briar and the palm seven-leaved
 Are her great sorrow and her great reward.
 Until the end be full, the Holy One
 Abides without. She soon shall have achieved
 Her perfect purity : yea, God the Lord
 Shall soon vouchsafe His Son to be her Son.

THE CARD-DEALER

COULD you not drink her gaze like wine ?
Yet though its splendour swoon
Into the silence languidly
As a tune into a tune,
Those eyes unravel the coiled night
And know the stars at noon.

The gold that's heaped beside her hand,
In truth rich prize it were ;
And rich the dreams that wreath her brows
With magic stillness there ;
And he were rich who should unwind
That woven golden hair.

Around her, where she sits, the dance
Now breathes its eager heat ;
And not more lightly or more true
Fall there the dancers' feet
Than fall her cards on the bright board
As 'twere a heart that beat.

Her fingers let them softly through,
Smooth polished silent things ;
And each one as it falls reflects
In swift light-shadowings,
Blood-red and purple, green and blue,
The great eyes of her rings.

Whom plays she with ? With thee, who lov'st
Those gems upon her hand ;
With me, who search her secret brows ;
With all men, bless'd or bann'd.
We play together, she and we,
Within a vain strange land :

A land without any order,—
Day even as night, (one saith,)—
Where who lieth down ariseth not
Nor the sleeper awakeneth ;
A land of darkness as darkness itself
And of the shadow of death.

What be her cards, you ask ? Even these :—
The heart, that doth but crave
More, having fed ; the diamond,
Skilled to make base seem brave ;
The club, for smiting in the dark ;
The spade, to dig a grave.

And do you ask what game she plays ?
 With me 'tis lost or won ;
 With thee it is playing still ; with him
 It is not well begun ;
 But 'tis a game she plays with all
 Beneath the sway o' the sun.

Thou seest the card that falls,—she knows
 The card that followeth :
 Her game in thy tongue is called Life,
 As ebbs thy daily breath :
 When she shall speak, thou'lt learn her tongue
 And know she calls it Death.

VOX ECCLESIAE, VOX CHRISTI

I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held ; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?—Rev. vi. 9, 10.

Nor 'neath the altar only,—yet, in sooth,
 There more than elsewhere,—is the cry, “ How long ? ”
 The right sown there hath still borne fruit in wrong—
 The wrong waxed fourfold. Thence, (in hate of truth)
 O'er weapons blessed for carnage, to fierce youth
 From evil age, the word hath hissed along :—
 “ Ye are the Lord's : go forth, destroy, be strong :
 Christ's Church absolves ye from Christ's law of ruth.”

Therefore the wine-cup at the altar is
 As Christ's own blood indeed, and as the blood
 Of Christ's elect, at divers seasons spilt
 On the altar-stone, that to man's church, for this,
 Shall prove a stone of stumbling,—whence it stood
 To be rent up ere the true Church be built.

ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS

Not that the earth is changing, O my God !
 Nor that the seasons totter in their walk,—
 Not that the virulent ill of act and talk
 Seethes ever as a winepress ever trod,—
 Not therefore are we certain that the rod
 Weighs in thine hand to smite thy world ; though now
 Beneath thine hand so many nations bow,
 So many kings :—not therefore, O my God !—

But because Man is parcelled out in men
 To-day ; because, for any wrongful blow
 No man not stricken asks, “ I would be told
 Why thou dost thus ; ” but his heart whispers then,
 “ He is he, I am I.” By this we know
 That our earth falls asunder, being old.

SHAKESPEAR

Probably there is no character in which is so much of Shakespear himself as in Hamlet except in Falstaff.

DEAR friend, if there be any bond
Which friendship wins not much beyond—
So old and fond, since thought began—
It may be that whose subtle span
Binds Shakespear to an English man.

BLAKE

To the memory of William Blake, a Painter and Poet, whose greatness may be named even here since it was equalled by his goodness, this tablet is now erected, — years after his death, at the age of sixty-eight, on August 12th, 1827, in poverty and neglect, by one who honours his life and works.

EPITAPH

ALL beauty to pourtray,
Therein his duty lay,
And still through toilsome strife
Duty to him was life—
Most thankful still that duty
Lay in the paths of beauty.

A TRIP TO PARIS AND BELGIUM

I

LONDON TO FOLKESTONE

(Half-past one to half-past five)

A CONSTANT keeping-past of shaken trees,
And a bewildered glitter of loose road;
Banks of bright growth, with single blades atop
Against white sky; and wires—a constant chain—
That seem to draw the clouds along with them
(Things which one stoops against the light to see
Through the low window; shaking by at rest,
Or fierce like water as the swiftness grows);
And, seen through fences or a bridge far off,
Trees that in moving keep their intervals
Still one 'twixt bar and bar; and then at times
Long reaches of green level, where one cow,
Feeding among her fellows that feed on,
Lifts her slow neck, and gazes for the sound.

There are six of us: I that write away;
Hunt reads Dumas, hard-lipped, with heavy jowl
And brows hung low, and the long ends of hair
Standing out limp. A grazier at one end

(Thank luck not my end !) has blocked out the air,
 And sits in heavy consciousness of guilt.
 The poor young muff who's face to face with me
 Is pitiful in loose collar and black tie,
 His latchet-button shaking as we go.
 There are flowers by me, half upon my knees,
 Owned by a dame who's fair in soul, no doubt :
 The wind that beats among us carries off
 Their scent, but still I have them for my eye.

Fields mown in ridges ; and close garden-crops
 Of the earth's increase ; and a constant sky
 Still with clear trees that let you see the wind ;
 And snatches of the engine-smoke, by fits
 Tossed to the wind against the landscape, where
 Rooks stooping heave their wings upon the day.

Brick walls we pass between, passed so at once
 That for the suddenness I cannot know
 Or what, or where begun, or where at end.
 Sometimes a Station in grey quiet ; whence,
 With a short gathered champing of pent sound,
 We are let out upon the air again.
 Now nearly darkness ; knees and arms and sides
 Feel the least touch, and close about the face
 A wind of noise that is along like God.
 Pauses of water soon, at intervals,
 That has the sky in it ;—the reflexes
 O' the trees move towards the bank as we go by,
 Leaving the water's surface plain. I now
 Lie back and close my eyes a space ; for they
 Smart from the open forwardness of thought
 Fronting the wind——

——I did not scribble more,
 Be certain, after this ; but yawned, and read,
 And nearly dozed a little, I believe ;
 Till, stretching up against the carriage-back,
 I was roused altogether, and looked out
 To where, upon the desolate verge of light,
 Yearned, pale and vast, the iron-coloured sea.

II

BOULOGNE TO AMIENS AND PARIS

(3 to 11 P.M. ; 3rd class)

STRONG extreme speed, that the brain hurries with,
 Further than trees, and hedges, and green grass
 Whitened by distance,—further than small pools
 Held among fields and gardens,—further than
 Haystacks and windmill-sails and roofs and herds,—
 The sea's last margin ceases at the sun.

The sea has left us, but the sun remains.
 Sometimes the country spreads aloof in tracts
 Smooth from the harvest ; sometimes sky and land
 Are shut from the square space the window leaves
 By a dense crowd of trees, stem behind stem

Passing across each other as we pass :
 Sometimes tall poplar-wands stand white, their heads
 Outmeasuring the distant hills. Sometimes
 The ground has a deep greenness ; sometimes brown
 In stubble ; and sometimes no ground at all,
 For the close strength of crops that stand unreaped.
 The water-plots are sometimes all the sun's,—
 Sometimes quite green through shadows filling them,
 Or islanded with growths of reeds,—or else
 Masked in grey dust like the wide face o' the fields.
 And still the swiftness lasts ; that to our speed
 The trees seem shaken like a press of spears.

There is some count of us :—folks travelling-capped,
 Priesthood, and lank hard-featured soldiery,
 Females (no women), blouses, Hunt, and I.

We are relayed at Amiens. The steam
 Snorts, chafes, and bridles, like three-hundred horse,
 And flings its dusky mane upon the air.
 Our company is thinned, and lamps alight :
 But still there are the folks in travelling-caps—
 No priesthood now, but always soldiery,
 And babies to make up for show in noise,
 Females (no women), blouses, Hunt, and I.

Our windows at one side are shut for warmth ;
 Upon the other side, a leaden sky,
 Hung in blank glare, makes all the country dim,
 Which too seems bald and meagre,—be it truth,
 Or of the waxing darkness. Here and there
 The shade takes light, where in thin patches stand
 The unstirred dregs of water.

Hunt can see
 A moon, he says ; but I am too far back.
 Still the same speed and thunder. We are stopped
 Again, and speech tells clearer than in day.

Hunt has just stretched to tell me that he fears
 I and my note-book may be taken for
 The stuff that goes to make an "émissaire
 De la perfide." Let me abate my zeal :
 There is a stout gendarme within the coach.

This cursed pitching is too bad. My teeth
 Jingle together in it ; and my legs
 (Which I got wet at Boulogne this good day
 Wading for star-fish) are so chilled that I
 Would don my coat, were not these seats too hard
 To spare it from beneath me, and were not
 The love of ease less than the love of sloth.

Hunt has just told me it is nearly eight :
 We do not reach till half-past ten. Drat verse,
 And steam, and Paris, and the fins of Time !
 Marry, for me, look you, I will go sleep.

Most of them slept ; I could not—held awake
 By jolting clamour, with shut eyes ; my head
 Willing to nod and fancy itself vague.
 Only at Stations I looked round me, when

Short silence paused among us, and I felt
 A creeping in my feet from abrupt calm.
 At such times Hunt would jerk himself, and then
 Tumble uncouthly forward in his sleep.
 This lasted near three hours. The darkness now
 Stayeth behind us on the sullen road,
 And all this light is Paris. Dieu merci.

PARIS. *Saturday Night, 29.*

Send me, dear William, by return of post,
 As much as you can manage of that rhyme
 Incurred at Ventnor. Bothers and delays
 Have still prevented me from copying this
 Till now; now that I do so, let it be
 Anticipative compensation.
 Numéro 4 Rue Geoffroy Marie,
 Faubourg Montmartre, près des Boulevards.
 Dear William, labelled thus the thing will reach.

III

THE STAIRCASE OF NOTRE DAME, PARIS

As one who, groping in a narrow stair,
 Hath a strong sound of bells upon his ears,
 Which, being at a distance off, appears
 Quite close to him because of the pent air :
 So with this France. She stumbles file and square
 Darkling and without space for breath : each one
 Who hears the thunder says : "It shall anon
 Be in among her ranks to scatter her."

This may be ; and it may be that the storm
 Is spent in rain upon the unscathed seas,
 Or wasteth other countries ere it die :
 Till she,—having climbed always through the swarm
 Of darkness and of hurtling sound,—from these
 Shall step forth on the light in a still sky.

IV

PLACE DE LA BASTILLE, PARIS

How dear the sky has been above this place !
 Small treasures of this sky that we see here
 Seen weak through prison-bars from year to year ;
 Eyed with a painful prayer upon God's grace
 To save, and tears which stayed along the face
 Lifted at sunset. Yea, how passing dear
 Those nights when through the bars a wind left clear
 The heaven, and moonlight soothed the limpid space !

So was it, till one night the secret kept
 Safe in low vault and stealthy corridor
 Was blown abroad on gospel-tongues of flame.
 O ways of God, mysterious evermore !
 How many on this spot have cursed and wept
 That all might stand here now and own Thy Name.

V

ON A HANDFUL OF FRENCH MONEY

THESE coins that jostle on my hand do own
 No single image : each name here and date
 Denoting in man's consciousness and state
 New change. In some, the face is clearly known,—
 In others marred. The badge of that old throne
 Of Kings is on the obverse ; or this sign
 Which says, " I France am all—lo, I am mine ! "
 Or else the Eagle that dared soar alone.
 Even as these coins, so are these lives and years
 Mixed and bewildered ; yet hath each of them
 No less its part in what is come to be
 For France. Empire, Republic, Monarchy,—
 Each clamours or keeps silence in her name,
 And lives within the pulse that now is hers.

VI

TO THE P.R.B.

WOOLNER and Stephens, Collinson, Millais,
 And my first brother, each and every one,
 What portion is theirs now beneath the sun
 Which, even as here, in England makes to-day ?
 For most of them life runs not the same way
 Always, but leaves the thought at loss : I know
 Merely that Woolner keeps not even the show
 Of work, nor is enough awake for play.
 Meanwhile Hunt and myself race at full speed
 Along the Louvre, and yawn from school to school,
 Wishing worn-out those masters known as old.
 And no man asks of Browning ; though indeed
 (As the book travels with me) any fool
 Who would might hear Sordello's story told.

VII

IN THE TRAIN, AND AT VERSAILLES

IN a dull swiftness we are carried by
 With bodies left at sway and shaking knees.
 The wind has ceased, or is a feeble breeze
 Warm in the sun. The leaves are not yet dry
 From yesterday's dense rain. All, low and high,
 A strong green country ; but, among its trees,
 Ruddy and thin with Autumn. After these
 There is the city still before the sky.
 Versailles is reached. Pass we the galleries
 And seek the gardens. A great silence here,
 Through the long planted alleys, to the long
 Distance of water. More than tune or song,
 Silence shall grow to awe within thine eyes,
 Till thy thought swim with the blue turning sphere.

VIII

LAST VISIT TO THE LOUVRE

THE CRY OF THE P.R.B., AFTER A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF THE
CANVASES OF RUBENS, CORREGGIO, *et hoc genus omne*.

Non noi pittori! God of Nature's truth,
If these, not we! Be it not said, when one
Of us goes hence: "As these did, he hath done;
His feet sought out their footprints from his youth."
Because, dear God! the flesh Thou madest smooth
These carked and fretted, that it seemed to run
With ulcers; and the daylight of thy sun
They parcelled into blots and glares, uncouth
With stagnant grouts of paint. Men say that these
Had further sight than man's, but that God saw
Their works were good. God that didst know them foul!
In such a blindness, blinder than the owl,
Leave us! Our sight can reach unto thy seas
And hills; and 'tis enough for tears of awe.

IX

LAST SONNETS AT PARIS

I

CHINS that might serve the new Jerusalem;
Streets footsore; minute whisking milliners,
Dubbed graceful, but at whom one's eye demurs,
Knowing of England; ladies, much the same;
Bland smiling dogs with manes—a few of them
At pains to look like sporting characters;
Vast humming tabbies smothered in their furs;
Groseille, orgeat, meringues à la crème—
Good things to study; ditto bad—the maps
Of sloshy colour in the Louvre; *cing-francs*
The largest coin; and at the restaurants
Large Ibrahim Pachas in Turkish caps
To pocket them. *Un million d'habitants*:
Cast up, they'll make an Englishman—perhaps.

II

Tiled floors in bedrooms; trees (now run to seed—
Such seed as the wind takes) of Liberty;
Squares with new names that no one seems to see;
Scrambling Briarean passages, which lead
To the first place you came from; urgent need
Of unperturbed nasal philosophy;
Through Paris (what with church and gallery)
Some forty first-rate paintings,—or indeed
Fifty mayhap; fine churches; splendid inns;
Fierce sentinels (toy-size without the stands)
Who spit their oaths at you and grind their r's
If at a fountain you would wash your hands;
One Frenchman (this is fact) who thinks he spars:—
Can even good dinners cover all these sins?

III

Yet in the mighty French metropolis
 Our time has not gone from us utterly
 In waste. The wise man saith, "An ample fee
 For toil, to work thine end." Aye that it is.
 Should England ask, "Was narrow prejudice
 Stretched to its utmost point unflinchingly,
 Even unto lying, at all times, by ye?"
 We can say firmly: "Lord, thou knowest this,
 Our soil may own us." Having but small French,
 Hunt passed for a stern Spartan all the while,
 Uncompromising, of few words: for me—
 I think I was accounted generally
 A fool, and just a little cracked. Thy smile
 May light on us, Britannia, healthy wench.

X

FROM PARIS TO BRUSSELS

(11 P.M. 15 *October to half-past* 1 P.M. 16)

PROEM AT THE PARIS STATION

IN France (to baffle thieves and murderers)
 A journey takes two days of passport work
 At least. The plan's sometimes a tedious one,
 But bears its fruit. Because, the other day,
 In passing by the Morgue, we saw a man
 (The thing is common, and we never should
 Have known of it, only we passed that way)
 Who had been stabbed and tumbled in the Seine,
 Where he had stayed some days. The face was black,
 And, like a negro's, swollen; all the flesh
 Had furred, and broken into a green mould.

Now, very likely, he who did the job
 Was standing among those who stood with us,
 To look upon the corpse. You fancy him—
 Smoking an early pipe, and watching, as
 An artist, the effect of his last work.
 This always if it had not struck him that
 'Twere best to leave while yet the body took
 Its crust of rot beneath the Seine. It may:
 But, if it did not, he can now remain
 Without much fear. *Only*, if he should want
 To travel, and have not his passport yet,
 (Deep dogs these French police!) he may be caught.

Therefore you see (lest, being murderers,
 We should not have the sense to go before
 The thing were known, or to stay afterwards)
 There is good reason why—having resolved
 To start for Belgium—we were kept three days
 To learn about the passports first, then do
 As we had learned. This notwithstanding, in
 The fullness of the time 'tis come to pass.

XI

ON THE ROAD

OCTOBER, and eleven after dark :
 Both mist and night. Among us in the coach
 Packed heat on which the windows have been shut :
 Our backs unto the motion—Hunt's and mine.
 The last lamps of the Paris Station move
 Slow with wide haloes past the clouded pane ;
 The road in secret empty darkness. One
 Who sits beside me, now I turn, has pulled
 A nightcap to his eyes. A woman here,
 Knees to my knees—a twenty-nine-year-old—
 Smiles at the mouth I open, seeing him :
 I look her gravely in the jaws, and write.
 Already while I write heads have been leaned
 Upon the wall,—the lamp that's overhead
 Dropping its shadow to the waist and hands.

Some time 'twixt sleep and wake. A dead pause then,
 With giddy humming silence in the ears.
 It is a Station. Eyes are opening now,
 And mouths collecting their propriety.
 From one of our two windows, now drawn up,
 A lady leans, hawks a clear throat, and spits.

Hunt lifts his head from my cramped shoulder where
 It has been lying—long stray hairs from it
 Crawling upon my face and teasing me.
 Ten minutes' law. Our feet are in the road.
 A weak thin dimness at the sky, whose chill
 Lies vague and hard. The mist of crimson heat
 Hangs, a spread glare, about our engine's bulk.
 I shall get in again, and sleep this time.

A heavy clamour that fills up the brain
 Like thought grown burdensome ; and in the ears
 Speed that seems striving to o'ertake itself ;
 And in the pulses torpid life, which shakes
 As water to a stir of wind beneath.

Poor Hunt, who has the toothache and can't smoke,
 Has asked me twice for brandy. I would sleep ;
 But man proposes, and no more. I sit
 With open eyes, and a head quite awake,
 But which keeps catching itself lolled aside
 And looking sentimental. In the coach,
 If any one tries talking, the voice jolts,
 And stuns the ear that stoops for it.

Amiens.

Half-an-hour's rest. Another shivering walk
 Along the station, waiting for the bell.
 Ding-dong. Now this time, by the Lord, I'll sleep.

I must have slept some while. Now that I wake,
 Day is beginning in a kind of haze
 White with grey trees. The hours have had their lapse,

A sky too dull for cloud. A country lain
 In fields, where teams drag up the furrow yet ;
 Or else a level of trees, the furthest ones
 Seen like faint clouds at the horizon's point.
 Quite a clear distance, though in vapour. Mills
 That turn with the dry wind. Large stacks of hay
 Made to look bleak. Dead autumn, and no sun.

The smoke upon our course is borne so near
 Along the earth, the earth appears to steam.
 Blanc-Misseron, the last French station, passed.
 We are in Belgium. It is just the same :—
 Nothing to write of, and no good in verse.

Curse the big mounds of sand-weed ! curse the miles
 Of barren chill,—the twentyfold relays !
 Curse every beastly Station on the road !

As well to write as swear. Hunt was just now
 Making great eyes because outside the pane
 One of the stokers passed whom he declared
 A stunner. A vile mummy with a bag
 Is squatted next me : a disgusting girl
 Broad opposite. We have a poet, though,
 Who is a gentleman, and looks like one ;
 Only he seems ashamed of writing verse,
 And heads each new page with "*Mon cher Ami.*"
 Hunt's stunner has just come into the coach,
 And set us hard agrin from ear to ear.

Another Station. There's a stupid horn
 Set wheezing. Now I should just like to know
 —Just merely for the whim—what good that is.
 These Stations for the most part are a kind
 Of London coal-merchant's back premises ;
 Whitewashed, but as by hands of coal-heavers ;
 Grimy themselves, and always circled in
 With foul coke-loads that make the nose aroint.

Here is a Belgian village,—no, a town
 Moated and buttressed. Next, a water-track
 Lying with draggled reeds in a flat slime.
 Next, the old country, always all the same.
 Now by Hans Hemmling and by John Van Eyck,
 You'll find, till something's new, I write no more.

(4 HOURS)

There is small change of country ; but the sun
 Is out, and it seems shame this were not said :
 For upon all the grass the warmth has caught ;
 And betwixt distant whitened poplar-stems
 Makes greener darkness ; and in dells of trees
 Shows spaces of a verdure that was hid ;
 And the sky has its blue floated with white,
 And crossed with falls of the sun's glory aslant
 To lay upon the waters of the world ;
 And from the road men stand with shaded eyes
 To look ; and flowers in gardens have grown strong,
 And our own shadows here within the coach
 Are brighter ; and all colour has more bloom,

So, after the sore torments of the route :—
 Toothache, and headache, and the ache of wind,
 And huddled sleep, and smarting wakefulness,
 And night, and day, and hunger sick at food,
 And twentyfold relays, and packages
 To be unlocked, and passports to be found,
 And heavy well-kept landscape ;—we were glad
 Because we entered Brussels in the sun.

XII

ON THE ROAD TO WATERLOO : 17 OCTOBER

(EN VIGILANTE, 2 HOURS)

It is grey tingling azure overhead
 With silver drift. Beneath, where from the green
 The trees are reared, the distance stands between
 At peace : and on this side the whole is spread
 For sowing and for harvest, subjected
 Clear to the sky and wind. The sun's slow height
 Holds it through noon, and at the furthest night
 It lies to the moist starshine and is fed.
 Sometimes there is no country seen (for miles
 You think) because of the near roadside path
 Dense with long forest. Where the waters run
 They have the sky sunk into them—a bath
 Of still blue heat ; and in their flow, at whiles,
 There is a blinding vortex of the sun.

XIII

A HALF-WAY PAUSE

THE turn of noontide has begun.
 In the weak breeze the sunshine yields.
 There is a bell upon the fields.
 On the long hedgerow's tangled run
 A low white cottage intervenes :
 Against the wall a blind man leans,
 And sways his face to have the sun.

Our horses' hoofs stir in the road,
 Quiet and sharp. Light hath a song
 Whose silence, being heard, seems long.
 The point of noon maketh abode,
 And will not be at once gone through.
 The sky's deep colour saddens you,
 And the heat weighs a dreamy load.

XIV

ON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

So then, the name which travels side by side
 With English life from childhood—Waterloo—
 Means this. The sun is setting. " Their strife grew
 Till the sunset, and ended," says our guide.

It lacked the "chord" by stage-use sanctified,
 Yet I believe one should have thrilled. For me,
 I grinned not, and 'twas something ;—certainly
 These held their point, and did not turn but died :

So much is very well. "Under each span
 Of these ploughed fields" ('tis the guide still) "there rot
 Three nations' slain, a thousand-thousandfold."
 Am I to weep? Good sirs, the earth is old :
 Of the whole earth there is no single spot
 But hath among its dust the dust of man.

XV

RETURNING TO BRUSSELS

UPON a Flemish road, when noon was deep,
 I passed a little consecrated shrine,
 Where, among simple pictures ranged in line,
 The blessed Mary holds her child asleep.
 To kneel here, shepherd-maidens leave their sheep
 When they feel grave because of the sunshine,
 And again kneel here in the day's decline ;
 And here, when their life ails them, come to weep.
 Night being full, I passed on the same road
 By the same shrine ; within, a lamp was lit
 Which through the silence of clear darkness glowed.
 Thus, when life's heat is past and doubts arise
 Darkling, the lamp of Faith must strengthen it,
 Which sometimes will not light and sometimes dies.

XVI

ANTWERP TO GHENT

WE are upon the Scheldt. We know we move
 Because there is a floating at our eyes
 Whatso they seek ; and because all the things
 Which on our outset were distinct and large
 Are smaller and much weaker and quite grey,
 And at last gone from us. No motion else.

We are upon the road. The thin swift moon
 Runs with the running clouds that are the sky,
 And with the running water runs—at whites
 Weak 'neath the film and heavy growth of reeds.
 The country swims with motion. Time itself
 Is consciously beside us, and perceived.
 Our speed is such the sparks our engine leaves
 Are burning after the whole train has passed.

The darkness is a tumult. We tear on,
 The roll behind us and the cry before,
 Constantly, in a lull of intense speed
 And thunder. Any other sound is known
 Merely by sight. The shrubs, the trees your eye
 Scans for their growth, are far along in haze.
 The sky has lost its clouds, and lies away
 Oppressively at calm : the moon has failed ;

Our speed has set the wind against us. Now
Our engine's heat is fiercer, and flings up
Great glares alongside. Wind and steam and speed
And clamour and the night. We are in Ghent.

XVII

ANTWERP AND BRUGES

I CLIMBED the stair in Antwerp church,
What time the circling thews of sound
At sunset seem to heave it round.
Far up, the carillon did search
The wind, and the birds came to perch
Far under, where the gables wound.

In Antwerp harbour on the Scheldt
I stood along, a certain space
Of night. The mist was near my face;
Deep on, the flow was heard and felt.
The carillon kept pause, and dwelt
In music through the silent place.

John Memmeling and John van Eyck
Hold state at Bruges. In sore shame
I scanned the works that keep their name.
The carillon, which then did strike
Mine ears, was heard of theirs alike:
It set me closer unto them.

I climbed at Bruges all the flight
The belfry has of ancient stone.
For leagues I saw the east wind blown;
The earth was grey, the sky was white.
I stood so near upon the height
That my flesh felt the carillon.

XVIII

ON LEAVING BRUGES

THE city's steeple-towers remove away,
Each singly; as each vain infatuate Faith
Leaves God in heaven, and passes. A mere breath
Each soon appears, so far. Yet that which lay
The first is now scarce further or more grey
Than the last is. Now all are wholly gone.
The sunless sky has not once had the sun
Since the first weak beginning of the day.

The air falls back as the wind finishes,
And the clouds stagnate. On the water's face
The current breathes along, but is not stirred.
There is no branch that thrills with any bird.
Winter is to possess the earth a space,
And have its will upon the extreme seas.

XIX

ASHORE AT DOVER

On landing, the first voice one hears is from
 An English police-constable ; a man
 Respectful, conscious that at need he can
 Enforce respect. Our custom-house at home
 Strict too, but quiet. Not the foul-mouthed scum
 Of passport-mongers who in Paris still
 Preserve the Reign of Terror ; not the till
 Where the King haggles, all through Belgium.
 The country somehow seems in earnest here,
 Grave and sufficient :—*England*, so to speak ;
 No other word will make the thing as clear.
 “ Ah ! habit,” you exclaim, “ and prejudice ! ”
 If so, so be it. One don't care to shriek,
 “ Sir, this *shall be !* ” But one believes it is.

FOR

A VENETIAN PASTORAL

BY GIORGIONE

(In the Louvre)

WATER, for anguish of the solstice :—nay,
 But dip the vessel slowly,—nay, but lean
 And hark how at its verge the wave sighs in
 Reluctant. Hush ! beyond all depth away
 The heat lies silent at the brink of day :
 Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
 That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,
 Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray
 Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes creep
 And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass
 Is cool against her naked side ? Let be :—
 Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
 Nor name this ever. Be it as it was,—
 Life touching lips with Immortality.

FOR

AN ALLEGORICAL DANCE OF WOMEN

BY ANDREA MANTEGNA

(In the Louvre)

SCARCELY, I think ; yet it indeed *may* be
 The meaning reached him, when this music rang
 Clear through his frame, a sweet possessive pang,
 And he beheld these rocks and that ridged sea.
 But I believe that, leaning tow'rd's them, he
 Just felt their hair carried across his face
 As each girl passed him ; nor gave ear to trace
 How many feet ; nor bent assuredly

His eyes from the blind fixedness of thought
 To know the dancers. It is bitter glad
 Even unto tears. Its meaning filleth it,
 A secret of the wells of Life : to wit :—
 The heart's each pulse shall keep the sense it had
 With all, though the mind's labour run to nought.

FOR

“RUGGIERO AND ANGELICA”

BY INGRES

I

A REMOTE sky, prolonged to the sea's brim :
 One rock-point standing buffeted alone,
 Vexed at its base with a foul beast unknown,
 Hell-birth of geomaunt and teraphim :
 A knight, and a winged creature bearing him,
 Reared at the rock : a woman fettered there,
 Leaning into the hollow with loose hair
 And throat let back and heartsick trail of limb.

The sky is harsh, and the sea shrewd and salt :
 Under his lord the griffin-horse ramps blind
 With rigid wings and tail. The spear's lithe stem
 Thrills in the roaring of those jaws : behind,
 That evil length of body chafes at fault.
 She does not hear nor see—she knows of them.

II

CLENCH thine eyes now,—'tis the last instant, girl :
 Draw in thy senses, set thy knees, and take
 One breath for all : thy life is keen awake,—
 Thou mayst not swoon. Was that the scattered whirl
 Of its foam drenched thee ?—or the waves that curl
 And split, bleak spray wherein thy temples ache ?
 Or was it his the champion's blood to flake
 Thy flesh ?—or thine own blood's anointing, girl ?

Now, silence : for the sea's is such a sound
 As irks not silence ; and except the sea,
 All now is still. Now the dead thing doth cease
 To writhe, and drifts. He turns to her : and she,
 Cast from the jaws of Death, remains there, bound,
 Again a woman in her nakedness.

FOR

A VIRGIN AND CHILD

BY HANS MEMMELINCK

(In the Academy of Bruges)

MYSTERY: God, man's life, born into man
 Of woman. There abideth on her brow
 The ended pang of knowledge, the which now
 Is calm assured. Since first her task began
 She hath known all. What more of anguish than
 Endurance oft hath lived through, the whole space
 Through night till day, passed weak upon her face
 While the heard lapse of darkness slowly ran?

All hath been told her touching her dear Son,
 And all shall be accomplished. Where He sits
 Even now, a babe, He holds the symbol fruit
 Perfect and chosen. Until God permits,
 His soul's elect still have the absolute
 Harsh nether darkness, and make painful moan.

FOR

A MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE

BY THE SAME

(In the Hospital of St. John at Bruges)

MYSTERY: Catherine the bride of Christ.
 She kneels, and on her hand the holy Child
 Now sets the ring. Her life is hushed and mild,
 Laid in God's knowledge—ever unenticed
 From God, and in the end thus fitly priced.
 Awe, and the music that is near her, wrought
 Of angels, have possessed her eyes in thought:
 Her utter joy is hers, and hath sufficed.

There is a pause while Mary Virgin turns
 The leaf, and reads. With eyes on the spread book,
 That damsel at her knees reads after her.
 John whom He loved, and John His harbinger,
 Listen and watch. Whereon soe'er thou look,
 The light is starred in gems and the gold burns.

THE SEA-LIMITS

CONSIDER the sea's listless chime :
 Time's self it is, made audible,—
 The murmur of the earth's own shell.
 Secret continuance sublime
 Is the sea's end : our sight may pass
 No furlong further. Since time was,
 This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's,—it hath
 The mournfulness of ancient life,
 Enduring always at dull strife.
 As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
 Its painful pulse is in the sands.
 Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
 Grey and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea,
 Listen alone among the woods ;
 Those voices of twin solitudes
 Shall have one sound alike to thee :
 Hark where the murmurs of thronged men
 Surge and sink back and surge again,—
 Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strown beach
 And listen at its lips : they sigh
 The same desire and mystery,
 The echo of the whole sea's speech.
 And all mankind is thus at heart
 Not anything but what thou art :
 And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

WORLD'S WORTH

'Tis of the Father Hilary.
 He strove, but could not pray ; so took
 The steep-coiled stair, where his feet shook
 A sad blind echo. Ever up
 He toiled. 'Twas a sick sway of air
 That autumn noon within the stair,
 As dizzy as a turning cup.
 His brain benumbed him, void and thin ;
 He shut his eyes and felt it spin ;
 The obscure deafness hemmed him in.
 He said : " O world, what world for me ? "

He leaned unto the balcony
 Where the chime keeps the night and day ;
 It hurt his brain, he could not pray.
 He had his face upon the stone :
 Deep 'twixt the narrow shafts, his eye
 Passed all the roofs to the stark sky,
 Swept with no wing, with wind alone.
 Close to his feet the sky did shake
 With wind in pools that the rains make ;
 The ripple set his eyes to ache.
 He said : " O world, what world for me ? "

He stood within the mystery
 Girding God's blessed Eucharist :
 The organ and the chaunt had ceas'd.
 The last words paused against his ear
 Said from the altar : drawn round him
 The gathering rest was dumb and dim.
 And now the sacring-bell rang clear
 And ceased ; and all was awe,—the breath
 Of God in man that warranteth
 The inmost utmost things of faith.
 He said : " O God, my world in Thee ! "

SONG AND MUSIC

O LEAVE your hand where it lies cool
 Upon the eyes whose lids are hot :
 Its rosy shade is bountiful
 Of silence, and assuages thought.
 O lay your lips against your hand
 And let me feel your breath through it,
 While through the sense your song shall fit
 The soul to understand.

The music lives upon my brain,
 Between your hands, within mine eyes ;
 It stirs your lifted throat like pain,
 An aching pulse of melodies.
 Lean nearer, let the music pause :
 The soul may better understand
 Your music, shadowed in your hand,
 Now while the song withdraws.

SACRAMENT HYMN

ON a fair Sabbath day, when His banquet is spread,
 It is pleasant to feast with my Lord :
 His stewards stand robed at the foot and the head
 Of the soul-filling, life-giving board.

All the guests here had burthens ; but by the King's grant
 We left them behind when we came ;
 The burthen of wealth and the burthen of want,
 And even the burthen of shame.

And oh, when we take them again at the gate,
 Though still we must bear them awhile,
 Much smaller they'll seem in the lane that grows strait,
 And much lighter to lift at the stile.

For that which is in us is life to the heart,
 Is dew to the soles of the feet,
 Fresh strength to the loins, giving ease from their smart.
 Warmth in frost, and a breeze in the heat.

No feast where the belly alone hath its fill,—
 He gives me His body and blood ;
 The 'blood and the body (I'll think of it still)
 Of my Lord, which is Christ, which is God.

DENNIS SHAND

THE shadows fall along the wall,
It's night at Haye-la-Serre;
The maidens weave since day grew eve,
The lady's in her chair.

O passing slow the long hours go
With time to think and sigh,
When weary maidens weave beneath
A listless lady's eye.

It's two days that Earl Simon's gone
And it's the second night;
At Haye-la-Serre the lady's fair,
In June the moon is light.

O it's "Maids, ye'll wake till I come back,"
And the hound's i' the lady's chair:
No shuttles fly, the work stands by,
It's play at Haye-la-Serre.

The night is worn, the lamp's forlorn,
The shadows waste and fail;
There's morning air at Haye-la-Serre,
The watching maids look pale.

O all unmarked the birds at dawn
Where drowsy maidens be;
But heard too soon the lark's first tune
Beneath the trysting tree.

"Hold me thy hand, sweet Dennis Shand,"
Says the Lady Joan de Haye,
"That thou to-morrow do forget
To-day and yesterday.

"For many a weary month to come
My lord keeps house with me,
And sighing summer must lie cold
In winter's company.

"And many an hour I'll pass thee by
And see thee and be seen;
Yet not a glance must tell by chance
How sweet these hours have been.

"We've all to fear; there's Maud the spy,
There's Ann whose face I scor'd,
There's Blanch tells Huot everything,
And Huot loves my lord.

"But O and it's my Dennis 'll know,
When my eyes look weary dim,
Who finds the gold for his girdle-fee
And who keeps love for him."

The morrow's come and the morrow-night,
It's feast at Haye-la-Serre,
And Dennis Shand the cup must hand
Beside Earl Simon's chair.

And still when the high pouring's done
 And cup and flagon clink,
 Till his lady's lips have touched the brim
 Earl Simon will not drink.

But it's, "Joan my wife," Earl Simon says,
 "Your maids are white and wan."
 And it's, "O," she says, "they've watched the night
 With Maud's sick sister Ann."

But it's, "Lady Joan and Joan my bird,
 Yourself look white and wan."
 And it's, "O, I've walked the night myself
 To pull the herbs for Ann:

"And some of your knaves were at the hutch
 And some in the cellarage,
 But the only one that watched with us
 Was Dennis Shand your page.

"Look on the boy, sweet honey lord,
 How drooped his eyelids be:
 The rosy colour's not yet back
 That paled in serving me."

O it's, "Wife, your maids are foolish jades,
 And you're a silly chuck,
 And the lazy knaves shall get their staves
 About their ears for luck:

"But Dennis Shand may take the cup
 And pour the wine to his hand;
 Wife, thou shalt touch it with thy lips,
 And drink thou, Dennis Shand!"

THE MIRROR

SHE knew it not:—most perfect pain
 To learn: this too she knew not. Strife
 For me, calm hers, as from the first.
 'Twas but another bubble burst
 Upon the curdling draught of life,—
 My silent patience mine again.

As who, of forms that crowd unknown
 Within a distant mirror's shade,
 Deems such an one himself, and makes
 Some sign; but when the image shakes
 No whit, he finds his thought betray'd,
 And must seek elsewhere for his own.

A YOUNG FIR-WOOD

THESE little firs to-day are things
 To clasp into a giant's cap,
 Or fans to suit his lady's lap.
 From many winters many springs
 Shall cherish them in strength and sap
 Till they be marked upon the map,
 A wood for the wind's wanderings.

All seed is in the sower's hands :
 And what at first was trained to spread
 Its shelter for some single head,—
 Yea, even such fellowship of wands,—
 May hide the sunset, and the shade
 Of its great multitude be laid
 Upon the earth and elder sands.

DURING MUSIC

O COOL unto the sense of pain
 That last night's sleep could not destroy ;
 O warm unto the sense of joy,
 That dreams its life within the brain.

What though I lean o'er thee to scan
 The written music cramped and stiff ;—
 'Tis dark to me, as hieroglyph
 On those weird bulks Egyptian.

But as from those, dumb now and strange,
 A glory wanders on the earth,
 Even so thy tones can call a birth
 From these, to shake my soul with change.

O swift, as in melodious haste
 Float o'er the keys thy fingers small ;
 O soft, as is the rise and fall
 Which stirs that shade within thy breast.

ON THE VITA NUOVA OF DANTE

As he that loves oft looks on the dear form
 And guesses how it grew to womanhood,
 And gladly would have watched the beauties bud
 And the mild fire of precious life wax warm :
 So I, long bound within the threefold charm
 Of Dante's love sublimed to heavenly mood,
 Had marvelled, touching his Beatitude,
 How grew such presence from man's shameful swarm.

At length within this book I found portrayed
 Newborn that Paradisal Love of his,
 And simple like a child ; with whose clear aid
 I understood. To such a child as this,
 Christ, charging well His chosen ones, forbade
 Offence : " for lo ! of such my kingdom is."

WELLINGTON'S FUNERAL

18th November 1852

"VICTORY!"

So once more the cry must be.
 Duteous mourning we fulfil
 In God's name; but by God's will,
 Doubt not, the last word is still
 "Victory!"

Funeral,

In the music round this pall,
 Solemn grief yields earth to earth;
 But what tones of solemn mirth
 In the pageant of new birth
 Rise and fall?

For indeed,

If our eyes were openèd,
 Who shall say what escort floats
 Here, which breath nor gleam denotes,—
 Fiery horses, chariots
 Fire-footed?

Trumpeter,

Even thy call he may not hear;
 Long-known voice for ever past,
 Till with one more trumpet-blast
 God's assuring word at last
 Reach his ear.

Multitude,

Hold your breath in reverent mood:
 For while earth's whole kindred stand
 Mute even thus on either hand,
 This soul's labour shall be scann'd
 And found good.

Cherubim,

Lift ye not even now your hymn?
 Lo! once lent for human lack,
 Michael's sword is rendered back.
 Thrills not now the starry track,
 Seraphim?

Gabriel,

Since the gift of thine "All hail!"
 Out of Heaven no time hath brought
 Gift with fuller blessing fraught
 Than the peace which this man wrought
 Passing well.

Be no word

Raised of bloodshed Christ-abhorr'd.
 Say: "'Twas thus in His decrees
 Who Himself, the Prince of Peace,
 For His harvest's high increase
 Sent a sword."

Veterans,
 He by whom the neck of France
 Then was given unto your heel,
 Timely sought, may lend as well
 To your sons his terrible
 Countenance.

Waterloo !
 As the last grave must renew,
 Ere fresh death, the banshee-strain,—
 So methinks upon thy plain
 Falls some presage in the rain,
 In the dew.

And O thou,
 Watching, with an exile's brow
 Unappeased, o'er death's dumb flood :—
 Lo ! the saving strength of God
 In some new heart's English blood
 Slumbers now.

Emperor,
 Is this all thy work was for ?—
 Thus to see thy self-sought aim,
 Yea thy titles, yea thy name,
 In another's shame, to shame
 Banded o'er ? *

Wellington,
 Thy great work is but begun.
 With quick seed his end is rife
 Whose long tale of conquering strife
 Shows no triumph like his life
 Lost and won.

TO THOMAS WOOLNER

First Snow, 9 February 1853

WOOLNER, to-night it snows for the first time.
 Our feet know well the path where in this snow
 Mine leave one track : how all the ways we know
 Are hoary in the long-unwonted rime !
 Grey as their ghosts which now in your new clime
 Must haunt you while those singing spirits reap
 All night the field of hospitable sleep—
 Whose song, past the whole sea, finds counter-chime.
 Can the year change, and I not think of thee,
 With whom so many changes of the year
 So many years were watched—our love's degree
 Alone the same ? Ah still for thee and me,
 Winter or summer, Woolner, here or there,
 One grief, one joy, one loss, one victory.

* Date of the *Coup d'Etat* : 2nd December 1851.

THE CHURCH-PORCHES

I

(TO M.F.R.)

SISTER, first shake we off the dust we have
 Upon our feet, lest it defile the stones
 Inscriptured, covering their sacred bones
 Who lie i' the aisles which keep the names they gave,
 Their trust abiding round them in the grave;
 Whom painters paint for visible orisons,
 And to whom sculptors pray in stone and bronze;
 Their voices echo still like a spent wave.

Without here, the church-bells are but a tune,
 And on the carven church-door this hot noon
 Lays all its heavy sunshine here without:
 But having entered in, we shall find there
 Silence, and sudden dimness, and deep prayer,
 And faces of crowned angels all about.

II

(TO C.G.R.)

SISTER, arise: We have no more to sing
 Or say. The priest abideth as is meet
 To minister. Rise up out of thy seat,
 Though peradventure 'tis an irksome thing
 To cross again the threshold of our King
 Where His doors stand against the evil street,
 And let each step increase upon our feet
 The dust we shook from them at entering.

Must we of very sooth go home? The air,
 Whose heat outside makes mist that can be seen,
 Is very clear and cool where we have been.
 The priest abideth ministering. Lo!
 As he for service, why not we for prayer?
 It is so bidden, sister, let us go.

PENUMBRA

I DID not look upon her eyes,
 (Though scarcely seen, with no surprise,
 'Mid many eyes a single look,)
 Because they should not gaze rebuke,
 At night, from stars in sky and brook.

I did not take her by the hand,
 (Though little was to understand
 From touch of hand all friends might take,)
 Because it should not prove a flake
 Burnt in my palm to boil and ache.

I did not listen to her voice,
 (Though none had noted, where at choice
 All might rejoice in listening,)
 Because no such a thing should cling
 In the wood's moan at evening.

I did not cross her shadow once,
 (Though from the hollow west the sun's
 Last shadow runs along so far,) .
 Because in June it should not bar
 My ways, at noon when fevers are.

They told me she was sad that day,
 (Though wherefore tell what love's soothsay,
 Sooner than they, did register?) .
 And my heart leapt and wept to her,
 And yet I did not speak nor stir.

So shall the tongues of the sea's foam
 (Though many voices therewith come
 From drowned hope's home to cry to me,)
 Bewail one hour the more, when sea
 And wind are one with memory.

THE HONEYSUCKLE

I PLUCKED a honeysuckle where
 The hedge on high is quick with thorn,
 And climbing for the prize, was torn,
 And fouled my feet in quag-water;
 And by the thorns and by the wind
 The blossom that I took was thinn'd,
 And yet I found it sweet and fair.

Thence to a richer growth I came,
 Where, nursed in mellow intercourse,
 The honeysuckles sprang by scores,
 Not harried like my single stem,
 All virgin lamps of scent and dew.
 So from my hand that first I threw,
 Yet plucked not any more of them.

WORDS ON THE WINDOW-PANE *

DID she in summer write it, or in spring,
 Or with this wail of autumn at her ears,
 Or in some winter left among old years
 Scratched it through tettered cark? A certain thing
 That round her heart the frost was hardening,
 Not to be thawed of tears, which on this pane
 Channelled the rime, perchance, in fevered rain,
 For false man's sake and love's most bitter sting.

Howbeit, between this last word and the next
 Unwritten, subtly seasoned was the smart,
 And here at least the grace to weep: if she,
 Rather, midway in her disconsolate text,
 Rebelled not, loathing from the trodden heart
 That thing which she had found man's love to be.

* For a woman's fragmentary inscription.

ON THE SITE OF A MULBERRY-TREE ;

Planted by Wm. Shakspeare ; felled by the Rev. F. Gastrell

THIS tree, here fall'n, no common birth or death
 Shared with its kind. The world's enfranchised son,
 Who found the trees of Life and Knowledge one,
 Here set it, frailer than his laurel-wreath.
 Shall not the wretch whose hand it fell beneath
 Rank also singly—the supreme unhung ?
 Lo ! Sheppard, Turpin, pleading with black tongue
 This viler thief's unsuffocated breath !

We'll search thy glossary, Shakspeare ! whence almost,
 And whence alone, some name shall be reveal'd
 For this deaf drudge, to whom no length of ears
 Sufficed to catch the music of the spheres ;
 Whose soul is carrion now,—too mean to yield
 Some Starveling's ninth allotment of a ghost.

A MATCH WITH THE MOON

WEARY already, weary miles to-night
 I walked for bed : and so, to get some ease,
 I dogged the flying moon with similes.
 And like a wisp she doubled on my sight
 In ponds ; and caught in tree-tops like a kite ;
 And in a globe of film all liquorish
 Swam full-faced like a silly silver fish ;—
 Last like a bubble shot the welkin's height
 Where my road turned, and got behind me, and sent
 My wizened shadow craning round at me,
 And jeered, " So, step the measure,—one two three ! "
 And if I faced on her, looked innocent.
 But just at parting, halfway down a dell,
 She kissed me for good-night. So you'll not tell.

SUDDEN LIGHT

I HAVE been here before,
 But when or how I cannot tell :
 I know the grass beyond the door,
 The sweet, keen smell,
 The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before,—
 How long ago I may not know :
 But just when at that swallow's soar
 Your neck turned so,
 Some veil did fall,—I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before ?
 And shall not thus time's eddying flight
 Still with our lives our love restore
 In death's despite,
 And day and night yield one delight once more ?

STRATTON WATER

"O HAVE you seen the Stratton flood
That's great with rain to-day?
It runs beneath your wall, Lord Sands,
Full of the new-mown hay.

"I led your hounds to Hutton bank
To bathe at early morn:
They got their bath by Borrowbrake
Above the standing corn."

Out from the castle-stair Lord Sands
Looked up the western lea;
The rook was grieving on her nest,
The flood was round her tree.

Over the castle-wall Lord Sands
Looked down the eastern hill:
The stakes swam free among the boats,
The flood was rising still.

"What's yonder far below that lies
So white against the slope?"
"O it's a sail o' your bonny barks
The waters have washed up."

"But I have never a sail so white,
And the water's not yet there."
"O it's the swans o' your bonny lake
The rising flood doth scare."

"The swans they would not hold so still,
So high they would not win."
"O it's Joyce my wife has spread her smock
And fears to fetch it in."

"Nay, knave, it's neither sail nor swans,
Nor aught that you can say;
For though your wife might leave her smock,
Herself she'd bring away."

Lord Sands has passed the turret-stair,
The court, and yard, and all;
The kine were in the byre that day,
The nags were in the stall.

Lord Sands has won the weltering slope
Whereon the white shape lay:
The clouds were still above the hill,
And the shape was still as they.

Oh pleasant is the gaze of life
And sad is death's blind head;
But awful are the living eyes
In the face of one thought dead!

"In God's name, Janet, is it me
Thy ghost has come to seek?"
"Nay, wait another hour, Lord Sands,—
Be sure my ghost shall speak."

A moment stood he as a stone,
Then grovelled to his knee.
"O Janet, O my love, my love,
Rise up and come with me!"
"O once before you bade me come,
And it's here you have brought me!

"O many's the sweet word, Lord Sands,
You've spoken oft to me;
But all that I have from you to-day
Is the rain on my body.

"And many's the good gift, Lord Sands,
You've promised oft to me;
But the gift of yours I keep to-day
Is the babe in my body.

"O it's not in any earthly bed
That first my babe I'll see;
For I have brought my body here
That the flood may cover me."

His face was close against her face,
His hands of hers were fain:
O her wet cheeks were hot with tears,
Her wet hands cold with rain.

"They told me you were dead, Janet,—
How could I guess the lie?"
"They told me you were false, Lord Sands,—
What could I do but die?"

"Now keep you well, my brother Giles,—
Through you I deemed her dead!
As wan as your towers seem to-day,
To-morrow they'll be red.

"Look down, look down, my false mother,
That bade me not to grieve:
You'll look up when our marriage fires
Are lit to-morrow eve:

"O more than one and more than two
The sorrow of this shall see:
But it's to-morrow, love, for them,—
To-day's for thee and me."

He's drawn her face between his hands
And her pale mouth to his:
No bird that was so still that day
Chirps sweeter than his kiss.

The flood was creeping round their feet.
"O Janet, come away!
The hall is warm for the marriage-rite,
The bed for the birthday."

"Nay, but I hear your mother cry,
'Go bring this bride to bed!
And would she christen her babe unborn,
So wet she comes to wed?'

"I'll be your wife to cross your door
And meet your mother's e'e.
We plighted troth to wed i' the kirk,
And it's there you'll wed with me."

He's ta'en her by the short girdle
And by the dripping sleeve:
"Go fetch Sir Jock my mother's priest,—
You'll ask of him no leave."

"O it's one half-hour to reach the kirk
And one for the marriage-rite;
And kirk and castle and castle-lands
Shall be our babe's to-night."

"The flood's in the kirkyard, Lord Sands,
And round the belfry-stair."
"I bade you fetch the priest," he said,
"Myself shall bring him there."

"It's for the lilt of wedding bells
We'll have the hail to pour,
And for the clink of bridle-reins
The plashing of the oar."

Beneath them on the nether hill
A boat was floating wide:
Lord Sands swam out and caught the oars
And rowed to the hill-side.

He's wrapped her in a green mantle
And set her softly in;
Her hair was wet upon her face,
Her face was grey and thin;
And "Oh!" she said, "lie still, my babe,
It's out you must not win!"

But woe's my heart for Father John
As hard as he might pray,
There seemed no help but Noah's ark
Or Jonah's fish that day.

The first strokes that the oars struck
Were over the broad leas;
The next strokes that the oars struck
They pushed beneath the trees;

The last stroke that the oars struck,
The good boat's head was met,
And there the gate of the kirk-yard
Stood like a ferry-gate.

He's set his hand upon the bar
And lightly leaped within:
He's lifted her to his left shoulder,
Her knees beside his chin.

The graves lay deep beneath the flood
 Under the rain alone;
 And when the foot-stone made him slip,
 He held by the head-stone.

The empty boat thrawed i' the wind,
 Against the postern tied.
 "Hold still, you've brought my love with me,
 You shall take back my bride."

But woe's my heart for Father John
 And the saints he clamoured to!
 There's never a saint but Christopher
 Might hale such buttocks through!

And "Oh!" she said, "on men's shoulders
 I well had thought to wend,
 And well to travel with a priest,
 But not to have cared or ken'd.

"And oh!" she said, "it's well this way
 That I thought to have fared,—
 Not to have lighted at the kirk
 But stopped in the kirkyard.

"For it's oh and oh I prayed to God,
 Whose rest I hoped to win,
 That when to-night at your board-head
 You'd bid the feast begin,
 This water past your window-sill
 Might bear my body in."

Now make the white bed warm and soft
 And greet the merry morn;
 The night the mother should have died,
 The young son shall be born.

BEAUTY AND THE BIRD

SHE fluted with her mouth as when one sips,
 And gently waved her golden head, inclin'd
 Outside his cage close to the window-blind;
 Tilt her fond bird, with little turns and dips,
 Piped low to her of sweet companionships.
 And when he made an end, some seed took she
 And fed him from her tongue, which rosily
 Peeped as a piercing bud between her lips.

And like the child in Chaucer, on whose tongue
 The Blessed Mary laid, when he was dead,
 A grain,—who straightway praised her name in song:
 Even so, when she, a little lightly red,
 Now turned on me and laughed, I heard the throng
 Of inner voices praise her golden head.

DAWN ON THE NIGHT-JOURNEY

TILL dawn the wind drove round me. It is past
 And still, and leaves the air to lisp of bird,
 And to the quiet that is almost heard
 Of the new-risen day, as yet bound fast
 In the first warmth of sunrise. When the last
 Of the sun's hours to-day shall be fulfilled,
 There shall another breath of time be stilled
 For me, which now is to my senses cast
 As much beyond me as eternity,
 Unknown, kept secret. On the newborn air
 The moth quivers in silence. It is vast,
 Yea, even beyond the hills upon the sea,
 The day whose end shall give this hour as sheer
 As chaos to the irrevocable Past.

THE WOODSPURGE

THE wind flapped loose, the wind was still,
 Shaken out dead from tree and hill:
 I had walked on at the wind's will,—
 I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was,—
 My lips, drawn in, said not Alas!
 My hair was over in the grass,
 My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run
 Of some ten weeds to fix upon;
 Among those few, out of the sun,
 The woodspurge flowered, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be
 Wisdom or even memory:
 One thing then learnt remains to me,—
 The woodspurge has a cup of three.

AFTER THE FRENCH LIBERATION OF ITALY

As when the last of the paid joys of love
 Has come and gone; and with a single kiss
 At length, and with one laugh of satiate bliss,
 The wearied man a minute rests above
 The wearied woman, no more urged to move
 In those long throes of longing, till they glide,
 Now lightlier clasped, each to the other's side,
 In joys past acting, not past dreaming of:—

So Europe now beneath this paramour
 Lies for a little out of use,—full oft
 Submissive to his lust, a loveless whore.
 He wakes, she sleeps, the breath falls slow and soft.
 Wait: the bought body holds a birth within,
 An harlot's child, to scourge her for her sin.

EVEN SO

So it is, my dear.
 All such things touch secret strings
 For heavy hearts to hear.
 So it is, my dear.

Very like indeed :
 Sea and sky, afar, on high,
 Sand and strewn seaweed,—
 Very like indeed.

But the sea stands spread
 As one wall with the flat skies,
 Where the lean black craft like flies
 Seem well-nigh stagnated,
 Soon to drop off dead.

Seemed it so to us
 When I was thine and thou wast mine,
 And all these things were thus,
 But all our world in us ?

Could we be so now ?
 Not if all beneath heaven's pall
 Lay dead but I and thou,
 Could we be so now !

A LITTLE WHILE

A LITTLE while a little love
 The hour yet bears for thee and me
 Who have not drawn the veil to see
 If still our heaven be lit above.
 Thou merely, at the day's last sigh,
 Hast felt thy soul prolong the tone ;
 And I have heard the night-wind cry
 And deemed its speech mine own.

A little while a little love
 The scattering autumn hoards for us
 Whose bower is not yet ruinous
 Nor quite unleaved our songless grove.
 Only across the shaken boughs
 We hear the flood-tides seek the sea,
 And deep in both our hearts they rouse
 One wail for thee and me.

A little while a little love
 May yet be ours who have not said
 The word it makes our eyes afraid
 To know that each is thinking of.
 Not yet the end : be our lips dumb
 In smiles a little season yet :
 I'll tell thee, when the end is come,
 How we may best forget.

A NEW-YEAR'S BURDEN

ALONG the grass sweet airs are blown
 Our way this day in Spring.
 Of all the songs that we have known
 Now which one shall we sing ?
 Not that, my love, ah no !—
 Not this, my love ? why, so !—
 Yet both were ours, but hours will come and go.

The grove is all a pale frail mist,
 The new year sucks the sun.
 Of all the kisses that we kissed
 Now which shall be the one ?
 Not that my love, ah no !—
 Not this, my love ?—heigh-ho
 For all the sweets that all the winds can blow !

The branches cross above our eyes,
 The skies are in a net :
 And what's the thing beneath the skies
 We two would most forget ?
 Not birth, my love, no, no,—
 Not death, my love, no, no,—
 The love once ours, but ours long hours ago.

THE SONG OF THE BOWER

SAY, is it day, is it dusk in thy bower,
 Thou whom I long for, who longest for me ?
 Oh ! be it light, be it night, 'tis Love's hour,
 Love's that is fettered as Love's that is free.
 Free love has leaped to that innermost chamber,
 Oh ! the last time, and the hundred before :
 Fettered love, motionless, can but remember,
 Yet something that sighs from him passes the door.

Nay, but my heart when it flies to thy bower,
 What does it find there that knows it again ?
 There it must droop like a shower-beaten flower,
 Red at the rent core and dark with the rain.
 Ah ! yet what shelter is still shed above it,—
 What waters still image its leaves torn apart ?
 Thy soul is the shade that clings round it to love it,
 And tears are its mirror deep down in thy heart.

What were my prize, could I enter thy bower,
 This day, to-morrow, at eve or at morn ?
 Large lovely arms and a neck like a tower,
 Bosom then heaving that now lies forlorn.
 Kindled with love-breath, (the sun's kiss is colder !)
 Thy sweetness all near me, so distant to-day ;
 My hand round thy neck and thy hand on my shoulder,
 My mouth to thy mouth as the world melts away.

What is it keeps me afar from thy bower,—
 My spirit, my body, so fain to be there?
 Waters engulfing or fires that devour?—
 Earth heaped against me or death in the air?
 Nay, but in day-dreams, for terror, for pity,
 The trees wave their heads with an omen to tell;
 Nay, but in night-dreams, throughout the dark city,
 The hours, clashed together, lose count in the bell.

Shall I not one day remember thy bower,
 One day when all days are one day to me?—
 Thinking, "I stirred not, and yet had the power!"—
 Yearning, "Ah God, if again it might be!"
 Peace, peace! such a small lamp illumines, on this highway,
 So dimly so few steps in front of my feet,—
 Yet shows me that her way is parted from my way. . . .
 Out of sight, beyond light, at what goal may we meet?

ON CERTAIN ELIZABETHAN REVIVALS

O RUFF-EMBASTIONED vast Elizabeth,
 Bush to these bushel-bellied casks of wine,
 Home-growth, 'tis true, but rank as turpentine—
 What would we with such skittle-plays at death?
 Say, must we watch these brawlers' brandished lathe,
 Or to their reeking wit our ears incline,
 Because all Castaly flowed crystalline
 In gentle Shakspeare's modulated breath?

What! must our drama with the rat-pit vie,
 Nor the scene close while one is left to kill?
 Shall this be poetry? And thou—thou man
 Of blood, thou cannibalistic Caliban,
 What shall be said of thee? A poet?—Fie!
 "An honourable murderer, if you will."

DANTIS TENEBRÆ

(In Memory of my Father)

AND didst thou know indeed, when at the font
 Together with thy name thou gav'st me his,
 That also on thy son must Beatrice
 Decline her eyes according to her wont,
 Accepting me to be of those that haunt
 The vale of magical dark mysteries
 Where to the hills her poet's foot-track lies,
 And wisdom's living fountain to his chaunt
 Trembles in music? This is that steep land
 Where he that holds his journey stands at gaze
 Tow'rd sunset, when the clouds like a new height
 Seem piled to climb. These things I understand:
 For here, where day still soothes my lifted face,
 On thy bowed head, my father, fell the night.

THE SEED OF DAVID

(For a Picture)

Christ sprang from David Shepherd, and even so
 From David King, being born of high and low.
 The Shepherd lays his crook, the King his crown,
 Here at Christ's feet, and high and low bow down.

ASPECTA MEDUSA

(For a Drawing)

ANDROMEDA, by Perseus saved and wed,
 Hankered each day to see the Gorgon's head :
 Till o'er a fount he held it, bade her lean,
 And mirrored in the wave was safely seen
 That death she lived by.

Let not thine eyes know
 Any forbidden thing itself, although
 It once should save as well as kill : but be
 Its shadow upon life enough for thee.

PLIGHTED PROMISE

IN a soft-complexioned sky,
 Fleeting rose and kindling grey,
 Have you seen Aurora fly
 At the break of day ?
 So my maiden, so my plighted may
 Blushing cheek and gleaming eye
 Lifts to look my way.

Where the inmost leaf is stirred
 With the heart-beat of the grove,
 Have you heard a hidden bird
 Cast her note above ?
 So my lady, so my lovely love,
 Echoing Cupid's prompted word,
 Makes a tune thereof.

Have you seen, at heaven's mid-height,
 In the moon-rack's ebb and tide,
 Venus leap forth burning white,
 Dian pale and hide ?
 So my bright breast-jewel, so my bride,
 One sweet night, when fear takes flight,
 Shall leap against my side.

THE PASSOVER IN THE HOLY FAMILY

*(For a Drawing *)*

HERE meet together the prefiguring day
 And day prefigured. "Eating, thou shalt stand,
 Feet shod, loins girt, thy road-staff in thine hand,
 With blood-stained door and lintel,"—did God say
 By Moses' mouth in ages passed away.
 And now, where this poor household doth comprise
 At Paschal-Feast two kindred families,—
 Lo! the slain lamb confronts the Lamb to slay.

The pyre is piled. What agony's crown attained,
 What shadow of Death the Boy's fair brow subdues
 Who holds that blood wherewith the porch is stained
 By Zachary the priest? John binds the shoes
 He deemed himself not worthy to unloose;
 And Mary culls the bitter herbs ordained.

VENUS VERTICORDIA

(For a Picture)

SHE hath the apple in her hand for thee,
 Yet almost in her heart would hold it back;
 She muses, with her eyes upon the track
 Of that which in thy spirit they can see.
 Haply, "Behold, he is at peace," saith she;
 "Alas! the apple for his lips,—the dart
 That follows its brief sweetness to his heart,—
 The wandering of his feet perpetually!"

A little space her glance is still and coy;
 But if she give the fruit that works her spell,
 Those eyes shall flame as for her Phrygian boy.
 Then shall her bird's strained throat the woe foretell,
 And her far seas moan as a single shell,
 And through her dark grove strike the light of Troy.

* The scene is in the house-porch, where Christ holds a bowl of blood from which Zacharias is sprinkling the posts and lintel. Joseph has brought the lamb and Elizabeth lights the pyre. The shoes which John fastens and the bitter herbs which Mary is gathering form part of the ritual.

PANDORA

(For a Picture)

WHAT of the end, Pandora? Was it thine,
 The deed that set these fiery pinions free?
 Ah! wherefore did the Olympian consistory
 In its own likeness make thee half divine?
 Was it that Juno's brow might stand a sign
 For ever? and the mien of Pallas be
 A deadly thing? and that all men might see
 In Venus' eyes the gaze of Proserpine?

What of the end? These beat their wings at will,
 The ill-born things, the good things turned to ill,—
 Powers of the impassioned hours prohibited.
 Aye, clench the casket now! Whither they go
 Thou mayst not dare to think: nor canst thou know
 If Hope still pent there be alive or dead.

A SEA-SPELL

(For a Picture)

HER lute hangs shadowed in the apple-tree,
 While flashing fingers weave the sweet-strung spell
 Between its chords; and as the wild notes swell,
 The sea-bird for those branches leaves the sea.
 But to what sound her listening ear stoops she?
 What netherworld gulf-whispers doth she hear,
 In answering echoes from what planisphere,
 Along the wind, along the estuary?

She sinks into her spell: and when full soon
 Her lips move and she soars into her song,
 What creatures of the midmost main shall throng
 In furrowed surf-clouds to the summoning rune;
 Till he, the fated mariner, hears her cry,
 And up her rock, bare-breasted, comes to die?

FOR

"THE WINE OF CIRCE"

BY EDWARD BURNÉ JONES

DUSK-HAIRED and gold-robed o'er the golden wine
 She stoops, wherein, distilled of death and shame,
 Sink the black drops; while, lit with fragrant flame,
 Round her spread board the golden sunflowers shine.
 Doth Helios here with Hecaté combine
 (O Circe, thou their votaress!) to proclaim
 For these thy guests all rapture in Love's name,
 Till pitiless Night give Day the countersign?

Lords of their hour, they come. And by her knee
 Those cowering beasts, their equals heretofore,
 Wait; who with them in new equality
 To-night shall echo back the sea's dull roar
 With a vain wail from passion's tide-strown shore
 Where the dishevelled seaweed hates the sea.

LOVE-LILY

BETWEEN the hands, between the brows,
 Between the lips of Love-Lily,
 A spirit is born whose birth endows
 My blood with fire to burn through me ;
 Who breathes upon my gazing eyes,
 Who laughs and murmurs in mine ear,
 At whose least touch my colour flies,
 And whom my life grows faint to hear.

Within the voice, within the heart,
 Within the mind of Love-Lily,
 A spirit is born who lifts apart
 His tremulous wings and looks at me ;
 Who on my mouth his finger lays,
 And shows, while whispering lutes confer,
 That Eden of Love's watered ways
 Whose winds and spirits worship her.

Brows, hands, and lips, heart, mind, and voice,
 Kisses and words of Love-Lily,—
 Oh ! bid me with your joy rejoice
 Till riotous longing rest in me !
 Ah ! let not hope be still distraught,
 But find in her its gracious goal,
 Whose speech Truth knows not from her thought
 Nor Love her body from her soul.

ENGLISH MAY

WOULD God your health were as this month of May
 Should be, were this not England,—and your face
 Abroad, to give the gracious sunshine grace
 And laugh beneath the budding hawthorn-spray.
 But here the hedgerows pine from green to grey
 While yet May's lyre is tuning, and her song
 Is weak in shade that should in sun be strong ;
 And your pulse springs not to so faint a lay.

If in my life be breath of Italy,
 Would God that I might yield it all to you !
 So, when such grafted warmth had burgeoned through
 The languor of your Maytime's hawthorn-tree,
 My spirit at rest should walk unseen and see
 The garland of your beauty bloom anew.

CASSANDRA

*(For a Drawing *)*

I

REND, rend thine hair, Cassandra : he will go.

Yea, rend thy garments, wring thine hands, and cry

From Troy still towered to the unreddened sky.

See, all but she that bore thee mock thy woe :—

He most whom that fair woman arms, with show

Of wrath on her bent brows ; for in this place

This hour thou bad'st all men in Helen's face

The ravished ravishing prize of Death to know.

What eyes, what ears hath sweet Andromache,

Save for her Hector's form and step ; as tear

On tear make salt the warm last kiss he gave ?

He goes. Cassandra's words beat heavily

Like crows above his crest, and at his ear

Ring hollow in the shield that shall not save.

II

“O HECTOR, gone, gone, gone ! O Hector, thee

Two chariots wait, in Troy long bless'd and curs'd ;

And Grecian spear and Phrygian sand athirst

Crave from thy veins the blood of victory.

Lo ! long upon our hearth the brand had we,

Lit for the roof-tree's ruin : and to-day

The ground-stone quits the wall,—the wind hath way,—

And higher and higher the wings of fire are free.

“O Paris, Paris ! O thou burning brand,

Thou beacon of the sea whence Venus rose,

Lighting thy race to shipwreck ! Even that hand

Wherewith she took thine apple let her close

Within thy curls at last, and while Troy glows

Lift thee her trophy to the sea and land.”

* The subject shows Cassandra prophesying among her kindred, as Hector leaves them for his last battle. They are on the platform of a fortress, from which the Trojan troops are marching out. Helen is arming Paris ; Priam soothes Hecuba ; and Andromache holds the child to her bosom.

MARY MAGDALENE

AT THE DOOR OF SIMON THE PHARISEE

*(For a Drawing *)*

"WHY wilt thou cast the roses from thine hair?
 Nay, be thou all a rose,—wreath, lips, and cheek.
 Nay, not this house,—that banquet-house we seek;
 See how they kiss and enter; come thou there.
 This delicate day of love we two will share
 Till at our ear love's whispering night shall speak.
 What, sweet one,—hold'st thou still the foolish freak?
 Nay, when I kiss thy feet they'll leave the stair."

"Oh loose me! Seest thou not my Bridegroom's face
 That draws me to Him? For His feet my kiss,
 My hair, my tears He craves to-day:—and oh!
 What words can tell what other day and place
 Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of His?
 He needs me, calls me, loves me: let me go!"

MICHAEL SCOTT'S WOOING

(For a Drawing)

ROSE-SHEATHED beside the rosebud tongue
 Lurks the young adder's tooth;
 Milk-mild from new-born hemlock-bluth
 The earliest drops are wrung:
 And sweet the flower of his first youth
 When Michael Scott was young.

TROY TOWN

HEAVENBORN Helen, Sparta's queen,
(O Troy Town!)
 Had two breasts of heavenly sheen,
 The sun and moon of the heart's desire:
 All Love's lordship lay between.
*(O Troy's down,
 Tall Troy's on fire!)*

Helen knelt at Venus' shrine,
(O Troy Town!)
 Saying, "A little gift is mine,
 A little gift for a heart's desire.
 Hear me speak and make me a sign!
*(O Troy's down,
 Tall Troy's on fire!)*

* In the drawing Mary has left a procession of revellers, and is ascending by a sudden impulse the steps of the house where she sees Christ. Her lover has followed her, and is trying to turn her back.

"Look, I bring thee a carven cup ;
 (*O Troy Town !*)
See it here as I hold it up,—
Shaped it is to the heart's desire,
Fit to fill when the gods would sup.
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

"It was moulded like my breast ;
 (*O Troy Town !*)
He that sees it may not rest,
Rest at all for his heart's desire.
O give ear to my heart's behest !
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

"See my breast, how like it is ;
 (*O Troy Town !*)
See it bare for the air to kiss !
Is the cup to thy heart's desire ?
O for the breast, O make it his !
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

"Yea, for my bosom here I sue ;
 (*O Troy Town !*)
Thou must give it where 'tis due,
Give it there to the heart's desire.
Whom do I give my bosom to ?
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

"Each twin breast is an apple sweet.
 (*O Troy Town !*)
Once an apple stirred the beat
Of thy heart with the heart's desire :—
Say, who brought it then to thy feet ?
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

"They that claimed it then were three :
 (*O Troy Town !*)
For thy sake two hearts did he
Make forlorn of the heart's desire.
Do for him as he did for thee !
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

"Mine are apples grown to the south,
 (*O Troy Town !*)
Grown to taste in the days of drouth,
Taste and waste to the heart's desire :
Mine are apples meet for his mouth."
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

Venus looked on Helen's gift,
 (*O Troy Town !*)
 Looked and smiled with subtle drift,
 Saw the work of her heart's desire :—
 "There thou kneel'st for Love to lift !"
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

Venus looked in Helen's face,
 (*O Troy Town !*)
 Knew far off an hour and place,
 And fire lit from the heart's desire ;
 Laughed and said, "Thy gift hath grace !"
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

Cupid looked on Helen's breast,
 (*O Troy Town !*)
 Saw the heart within its nest,
 Saw the flame of the heart's desire,—
 Marked his arrow's burning crest. |
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

Cupid took another dart,
 (*O Troy Town !*)
 Fledged it for another heart,
 Winged the shaft with the heart's desire,
 Drew the string and said, "Depart !"
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

Paris turned upon his bed,
 (*O Troy Town !*)
 Turned upon his bed and said,
 Dead at heart with the heart's desire—
 "Oh to clasp her golden head !"
 (*O Troy's down,*
 Tall Troy's on fire !)

FIRST LOVE REMEMBERED

PEACE in her chamber, wheresoe'er
 It be, a holy place :
 The thought still brings my soul such grace
 As morning meadows wear.

Whether it still be small and light,
 A maid's who dreams alone,
 As from her orchard-gate the moon
 Its ceiling showed at night :

Or whether, in a shadow dense
 As nuptial hymns invoke,
 Innocent maidenhood awoke
 To married innocence :

There still the thanks unheard await
 The unconscious gift bequeathed :
 For there my soul this hour has breathed
 An air inviolate,

AN OLD SONG ENDED

*"How should I your true love know
From another one?"*

*"By his cockle-hat and staff
And his sandal-shoon."*

*"And what signs have told you now
That he hastens home?"*

*"Lo! the spring is nearly gone,
He is nearly come."*

*"For a token is there nought,
Say, that he should bring?"*

*"He will bear a ring I gave
And another ring."*

*"How may I, when he shall ask,
Tell him who lies there?"*

*"Nay, but leave my face unveiled
And unbound my hair."*

*"Can you say to me some word
I shall say to him?"*

*"Say I'm looking in his eyes
Though my eyes are dim."*

AFTER THE GERMAN SUBJUGATION OF FRANCE, 1871

Lo the twelfth year—the wedding-feast come round
With years for months—and lo the babe new-born;
Out of the womb's rank furnace cast forlorn,
And with contagious effluence seamed and crown'd.
To hail this birth, what fiery tongues surround
Hell's Pentecost—what clamour of all cries
That swell, from Absalom's scoff to Shimei's,
One scornful gamut of tumultuous sound!

For now the harlot's heart on a new sleeve
Is pranked; and her heart's lord of yesterday
*(Spurned from her bed, whose worm-spun silks o'erlay
Such fretwork as that other worm can weave)
Takes in his ears the vanished world's last yell,
And in his flesh the closing teeth of Hell.

DOWN STREAM

BETWEEN Holmscote and Hurstcote
The river-reaches wind,
The whispering trees accept the breeze,
The ripple's cool and kind ;
With love low-whispered 'twixt the shores,
With rippling laughters gay,
With white arms bared to ply the oars,
On last year's first of May.

Between Holmscote and Hurstcote
The river's brimmed with rain,
Through close-met banks and parted banks
Now near, now far again :
With parting tears caressed to smiles,
With meeting promised soon,
With every sweet vow that beguiles,
On last year's first of June.

Between Holmscote and Hurstcote
The river's flecked with foam,
'Neath shuddering clouds that hang in shrouds
And lost winds wild for home :
With infant wailings at the breast,
With homeless steps astray,
With wanderings shuddering tow'rds one rest
On this year's first of May.

Between Holmscote and Hurstcote
The summer river flows
With doubled flight of moons by night
And lilies' deep repose :
With lo ! beneath the moon's white stare
A white face not the moon,
With lilies meshed in tangled hair,
On this year's first of June.

Between Holmscote and Hurstcote
A troth was given and riven,
From heart's trust grew one life to two,
Two lost lives cry to Heaven :
With banks spread calm to meet the sky,
With meadows newly mowed,
The harvest-paths of glad July,
The sweet school-children's road.

THE CLOUD CONFINES

THE day is dark and the night
 To him that would search their heart ;
 No lips of cloud that will part
 Nor morning song in the light :
 Only, gazing alone,
 To him wild shadows are shown,
 Deep under deep unknown
 And height above unknown height.
 Still we say as we go,—
 " Strange to think by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day."

The Past is over and fled ;
 Named new, we name it the old ;
 Thereof some tale hath been told
 But no word comes from the dead ;
 Whether at all they be,
 Or whether as bond or free,
 Or whether they too were we,
 Or by what spell they have sped.
 Still we say as we go,—
 " Strange to think by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day."

What of the heart of hate
 That beats in thy breast, O Time ?—
 Red strife from the furthest prime,
 And anguish of fierce debate ;
 War that shatters her slain,
 And peace that grinds them as grain,
 And eyes fixed ever in vain
 On the pitiless eyes of Fate.
 Still we say as we go,—
 " Strange to think by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day."

What of the heart of love
 That bleeds in thy breast, O Man ?—
 Thy kisses snatched 'neath the ban
 Of fangs that mock them above ;
 Thy bells prolonged unto knells,
 Thy hope that a breath dispels,
 Thy bitter forlorn farewells
 And the empty echoes thereof ?
 Still we say as we go,—
 " Strange to think by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day."

The sky leans dumb on the sea,
 Aweary with all its wings;
 And oh! the song the sea sings
 Is dark everlastingly.
 Our past is clean forgot,
 Our present is and is not,
 Our future's a sealed seedplot,
 And what betwixt them are we?—
 We who say as we go—
 "Strange to think by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day."

SUNSET WINGS

TO-NIGHT this sunset spreads two golden wings
 Cleaving the western sky;
 Winged too with wind it is, and winnowings
 Of birds; as if the day's last hour in rings
 Of strenuous flight must die.

Sun-steeped in fire, the homeward pinions sway
 Above the dovecote-tops;
 And clouds of starlings, ere they rest with day,
 Sink, clamorous like mill-waters, at wild play,
 By turns in every copse:

Each tree heart-deep the wrangling rout receives,—
 Save for the whirr within,
 You could not tell the starlings from the leaves;
 Then one great puff of wings, and the swarm heaves
 Away with all its din.

Even thus Hope's hours, in ever-eddy flight,
 To many a refuge tend;
 With the first light she laughed, and the last light
 Glows round her still; who natheless in the night
 At length must make an end.

And now the mustering rooks innumerable
 Together sail and soar,
 While for the day's death, like a tolling knell,
 Unto the heart they seem to cry, Farewell,
 No more, farewell, no more!

Is Hope not plumed, as 'twere a fiery dart?
 And oh! thou dying day,
 Even as thou goest must she too depart,
 And Sorrow fold such pinions on the heart
 As will not fly away?

SOOTHSAY

Let no man ask thee of anything
Not yearborn between Spring and Spring.
More of all worlds than he can know,
Each day the single sun doth show.
A trustier gloss than thou canst give
From all wise scrolls demonstrative,
The sea doth sigh and the wind sing.

Let no man awe thee on any height
Of earthly kingship's mouldering might.
The dust his heel holds meet for thy brow
Hath all of it been what both are now ;
And thou and he may plague together
A beggar's eyes in some dusty weather
When none that is now knows sound or sight.

Crave thou no dower of earthly things
Unworthy Hope's imaginings.
To have brought true birth of Song to be
And to have won hearts to Poesy,
Or anywhere in the sun or rain
To have loved and been beloved again,
Is loftiest reach of Hope's bright wings.

The wild waifs cast up by the sea
Are diverse ever seasonably.
Even so the soul-tides still may land
A different drift upon the sand.
But one the sea is evermore :
And one be still, 'twixt shore and shore,
As the sea's life, thy soul in thee.

Say, hast thou pride ? How then may fit
Thy mood with flatterers' silk-spun wit ?
Haply the sweet voice lifts thy crest,
A breeze of fame made manifest.
Nay, but then chaf'st at flattery ? Pause :
Be sure thy wrath is not because
It makes thee feel thou lovest it.

Let thy soul strive that still the same
Be early friendship's sacred flame.
The affinities have strongest part
In youth, and draw men heart to heart :
As life wears on and finds no rest,
The individual in each breast
Is tyrannous to sunder them.

In the life-drama's stern cue-call,
A friend's a part well-prized by all :
And if thou meet an enemy,
What art thou that none such should be ?
Even so : but if the two parts run
Into each other and grow one,
Then comes the curtain's cue to fall,

Whate'er by other's need is claimed
 More than by thine,—to him unblamed
 Resign it: and if he should hold
 What more than he thou lack'st, bread, gold,
 Or any good whereby we live,—
 To thee such substance let him give
 Freely: nor he nor thou be shamed.

Strive that thy works prove equal: lest
 That work which thou hast done the best
 Should come to be to thee at length
 (Even as to envy seems the strength
 Of others) hateful and abhorr'd,—
 Thine own above thyself made lord,—
 Of self-rebuke the bitterest.

Unto the man of yearning thought
 And aspiration, to do nought
 Is in itself almost an act,—
 Being chasm-fire and cataract
 Of the soul's utter depths unseal'd.
 Yet woe to thee if once thou yield
 Unto the act of doing nought!

How callous seems beyond revoke
 The clock with its last listless stroke!
 How much too late at length!—to trace
 The hour on its forewarning face,
 The thing thou hast not dared to do! . . .
 Behold, this *may* be thus! Ere true
 It prove, arise and bear thy yoke.

Let lore of all Theology
 Be to thy soul what it *can* be:
 But know,—the Power that fashions man
 Measured not out thy little span
 For thee to take the meting-rod
 In turn, and so approve on God
 Thy science of Theometry.

To God at best, to chance at worst,
 Give thanks for good things, last as first.
 But windstrorn blossom is that good
 Whose apple is not gratitude.
 Even if no prayer uplift thy face,
 Let the sweet right to render grace
 As thy soul's cherished child be nurs'd.

Didst ever say, "Lo, I forget"?
 Such thought was to remember yet.
 As in a gravegarth, count to see
 The monuments of memory.
 Be this thy soul's appointed scope:—
 Gaze onward without claim to hope,
 Nor, gazing backward, court regret.

WINTER

How large that thrush looks on the bare thorn-tree !
 A swarm of such, three little months ago,
 Had hidden in the leaves and let none know
 Save by the outburst of their minstrelsy.
 A white flake here and there—a snow-lily
 Of last night's frost—our naked flower-beds hold ;
 And for a rose-flower on the darkling mould
 The hungry redbreast gleams. No bloom, no bee.

The current shudders to its ice-bound sedge ;
 Nipped in their bath, the stark reeds one by one
 Flash each its clinging diamond in the sun :
 'Neath winds which for this winter's sovereign pledge
 Shall curb great king-masts to the ocean's edge
 And leave memorial forest-kings o'erthrown.

SPRING

SOFT-LITTERED is the new-year's lambing-fold,
 And in the hollowed haystack at its side
 The shepherd lies o' nights now, wakeful-eyed
 At the ewes' travailing call through the dark cold.
 The young rooks cheep 'mid the thick caw o' the old :
 And near unpeopled stream-sides, on the ground,
 By her spring-cry the moorhen's nest is found,
 Where the drained flood-lands flaunt their marigold.

Chill are the gusts to which the pastures cower,
 And chill the current where the young reeds stand
 As green and close as the young wheat on land :
 Yet here the cuckoo and the cuckoo-flower
 Plight to the heart Spring's perfect imminent hour
 Whose breath shall soothe you like your dear one's hand.

UNTIMELY LOST

OLIVER MADOX BROWN. BORN 1855 ; DIED 1874

UPON the landscape of his coming life
 A youth high-gifted gazed, and found it fair :
 The heights of work, the floods of praise, were there.
 What friendships, what desires, what love, what wife ?—
 All things to come. The fanned springtime was rife
 With imminent solstice ; and the ardent air
 Had summer sweets and autumn fires to bear ;—
 Heart's ease full-pulsed with perfect strength for strife.

A mist has risen : we see the youth no more :
 Does he see on and strive on ? And may we
 Late-tottering world-worn hence, find *his* to be
 The young strong hand which helps us up that shore ?
 Or, echoing the No More with Nevermore,
 Must Night be ours and his ? We hope : and he ?

PARTED PRESENCE

Love, I speak to your heart,
Your heart that is always here.
Oh draw me deep to its sphere,
Though you and I are apart,
And yield, by the spirit's art,
Each distant gift that is dear.
O love, my love, you are here !

Your eyes are afar to-day,
Yet, love, look now in mine eyes.
Two hearts sent forth may despise
All dead things by the way.
All between is decay,
Dead hours and this hour that dies.
O love, look deep in mine eyes !

Your hands to-day are not here,
Yet lay them, love, in my hands.
The hourglass sheds its sands
All day for the dead hours' bier ;
But now, as two hearts draw near,
This hour like a flower expands.
O love, your hands in my hands !

Your voice is not on the air,
Yet, love, I can hear your voice :
It bids my heart to rejoice
As knowing your heart is there,—
A music sweet to declare
The truth of your steadfast choice.
O love, how sweet is your voice !

To-day your lips are afar,
Yet draw my lips to them, love.
Around, beneath, and above,
Is frost to bind and to bar ;
But where I am and you are,
Desire and the fire thereof.
O kiss me, kiss me, my love !

Your heart is never away,
But ever with mine, for ever,
For ever without endeavour,
To-morrow, love, as to-day ;
Two blent hearts never astray,
Two souls no power may sever,
Together, O my love, for ever !

A DEATH-PARTING

LEAVES and rain and the days of the year,
(Water-willow and wellaway,)
 All these fall, and my soul gives ear,
 And she is hence who once was here.
(With a wind blown night and day.)

Ah! but now, for a secret sign,
(The willow's wan and the water white,)
 In the held breath of the day's decline
 Her very face seemed pressed to mine.
(With a wind blown day and night.)

O love, of my death my life is fain;
(The willows wave on the water-way,)
 Your cheek and mine are cold in the rain,
 But warm they'll be when we meet again.
(With a wind blown night and day.)

Mists are heaved and cover the sky;
(The willows wail in the waning light,)
 O loose your lips, leave space for a sigh,—
 They seal my soul, I cannot die.
(With a wind blown day and night.)

Leaves and rain and the days of the year,
(Water-willow and wellaway,)
 All still fall, and I still give ear,
 And she is hence, and I am here.
(With a wind blown night and day.)

THREE SHADOWS

I LOOKED and saw your eyes
 In the shadow of your hair,
 As a traveller sees the stream
 In the shadow of the wood;
 And I said, "My faint heart sighs,
 Ah me! to linger there,
 To drink deep and to dream
 In that sweet solitude."

I looked and saw your heart
 In the shadow of your eyes,
 As a seeker sees the gold
 In the shadow of the stream;
 And I said, "Ah me! what art
 Should win the immortal prize,
 Whose want must make life cold
 And Heaven a hollow dream?"

I looked and saw your love
 In the shadow of your heart,
 As a diver sees the pearl
 In the shadow of the sea;
 And I murmured, not above
 My breath, but all apart,—
 "Ah! you can love, true girl,
 And is your love for me?"

ADIEU

WAVING whispering trees,
 What do you say to the breeze
 And what says the breeze to you?
 'Mid passing souls ill at ease,
 Moving murmuring trees,
 Would ye ever wave an Adieu?

Tossing turbulent seas,
 Winds that wrestle with these,
 Echo heard in the shell,—
 'Mid fleeting life ill at ease,
 Restless ravening seas,—
 Would the echo sigh Farewell?

Surging sumptuous skies,
 For ever a new surprise,
 Clouds eternally new,—
 Is every flake that flies,
 Widening wandering skies,
 For a sign—Farewell, Adieu?

Sinking suffering heart
 That know'st how weary thou art,—
 Soul so fain for a flight,—
 Aye, spread your wings to depart,
 Sad soul and sorrowing heart,—
 Adieu, Farewell, Good-night.

ASTARTE SYRIACA

(For a Picture)

MYSTERY: lo! betwixt the sun and moon
 Astarte of the Syrians: Venus Queen
 Ere Aphrodite was. In silver sheen
 Her twofold girdle clasps the infinite boon
 Of bliss whereof the heaven and earth commune:
 And from her neck's inclining flower-stem lean
 Love-freighted lips and absolute eyes that wean
 The pulse of hearts to the spheres' dominant tune.

Torch-bearing, her sweet ministers compel
 All thrones of light beyond the sky and sea
 The witnesses of Beauty's face to be:
 That face, of Love's all-penetrative spell
 Amulet, talisman, and oracle,—
 Betwixt the sun and moon a mystery.

CHIMES

I

HONEY-FLOWERS to the honey-comb,
And the honey-bee's from home.

A honey-comb and a honey-flower,
And the bee shall have his hour.

A honeyed heart for the honey-comb,
And the humming bee flies home.

A heavy heart in the honey-flower,
And the bee has had his hour.

II

A honey-cell's in the honeysuckle,
And the honey-bee knows it well.

The honey-comb has a heart of honey,
And the humming bee's so bonny.

A honey-flower's the honeysuckle,
And the bee's in the honey-bell.

The honeysuckle is sucked of honey,
And the bee is heavy and bonny.

III

Brown shell first for the butterfly,
And a bright wing by and by.

Butterfly, good-bye to your shell,
And, bright wings, speed you well.

Bright lamplight for the butterfly
And a burnt wing by and by.

Butterfly, alas for your shell,
And, bright wings, fare you well.

IV

Lost love-labour and lullaby,
And lowly let love lie.

Lost love-morrow and love fellow
And love's life lying low.

Lovelorn labour and life laid by,
And lowly let love lie.

Late love-longing and life-sorrow
And love's life lying low.

V

Beauty's body and benison
With a bosom-flower new-blown.

Bitter beauty and blessing bann'd
With a breast to burn and brand.

Beauty's bower in the dust o'erblown
With a bare white breast of bone.

Barren beauty and bower of sand
With a blast on either hand.

VI

Buried bars in the breakwater
And bubble of the brimming weir.

Body's blood in the breakwater
And a buried body's bier.

Buried bones in the breakwater
And bubble of the brawling weir.

Bitter tears in the breakwater
And a breaking heart to bear.

VII

Hollow heaven and the hurricane
And hurry of the heavy rain.

Hurried clouds in the hollow heaven
And a heavy rain hard-driven.

The heavy rain it hurries amain
And heaven and the hurricane.

Hurrying wind o'er the heaven's hollow
And the heavy rain to follow.

TO PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON, INCITING ME TO POETIC WORK

SWEET Poet, thou of whom these years that roll
Must one day yet the burdened birthright learn,
And by the darkness of thine eyes discern
How piercing was the sight within thy soul;—
Gifted apart, thou goest to the great goal,
A cloud-bound radiant spirit, strong to earn,
Light-reft, that prize for which fond myriads yearn
Vainly light-blest,—the Seër's aureole.

And doth thine ear, divinely dowered to catch
All spherul sounds in thy song blent so well,
Still hearken for my voice's slumbering spell
With wistful love? Ah! let the Muse now snatch
My wreath for thy young brows, and bend to watch
Thy veiled transfiguring sense's miracle.

THE LAST THREE FROM TRAFALGAR

AT THE ANNIVERSARY BANQUET, 21ST OCTOBER 187—

IN grappled ships around The Victory,
Three boys did England's Duty with stout cheer,
While one dread truth was kept from every ear,
More dire than deafening fire that churned the sea :
For in the flag-ship's weltering cockpit, he
Who was the Battle's Heart without a peer,
He who had seen all fearful sights save Fear,
Was passing from all life save Victory.

And round the old memorial board to-day,
Three greybeards—each a warworn British Tar—
View through the mist of years that hour afar :
Who soon shall greet, 'mid memories of fierce fray,
The impassioned soul which on its radiant way
Soared through the fiery cloud of Trafalgar.

FIAMMETTA

(For a Picture)

BEHOLD Fiammetta, shown in Vision here.
Gloom-girt 'mid Spring-flushed apple-growth she stands ;
And as she sways the branches with her hands,
Along her arm the sundered bloom falls sheer,
In separate petals shed, each like a tear ;
While from the quivering bough the bird expands
His wings. And lo ! thy spirit understands
Life shaken and shower'd and flown, and Death drawn near.

All stirs with change. Her garments beat the air :
The angel circling round her aureole
Shimmers in flight against the tree's grey bole :
While she, with reassuring eyes most fair,
A presage and a promise stands ; as 'twere
On Death's dark storm the rainbow of the Soul.

MNEMOSYNE

(For a Picture)

Thou fill'st from the winged chalice of the soul
Thy lamp, O Memory, fire-winged to its goal.

JOHN KEATS

THE weltering London ways where children weep
 And girls whom none call maidens laugh,—strange road
 Miring his outward steps, who inly trode
 The bright Castalian brink and Latmos' steep :—
 Even such his life's cross-paths ; till deathly deep
 He toiled through sands of Lethe ; and long pain,
 Weary with labour spurned and love found vain,
 In dead Rome's sheltering shadow wrapped his sleep.

O pang-dowered Poet, whose reverberant lips
 And heart-strung lyre awoke the Moon's eclipse,—
 Thou whom the daisies glory in growing o'er,—
 Their fragrance clings around thy name, not writ
 But rumour'd in water, while the fame of it
 Along Time's flood goes echoing evermore.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

WITH Shakspeare's manhood at a boy's wild heart,—
 Through Hamlet's doubt to Shakspeare near allied,
 And kin to Milton through his Satan's pride,—
 At Death's sole door he stooped, and craved a dart ;
 And to the dear new bower of England's art,—
 Even to that shrine Time else had deified,
 The unuttered heart that soared against his side,—
 Drove the fell point, and smote life's seals apart.

Thy nested home-loves, noble Chatterton ;
 The angel-trodden stair thy soul could trace
 Up Redcliffe's spire ; and in the world's armed space
 Thy gallant sword-play :—these to many an one
 Are sweet for ever ; as thy grave unknown
 And love-dream of thine unrecorded face.

WILLIAM BLAKE

(*To Frederick Shields, on his sketch of Blake's work-room and death-room,
 3 Fountain Court, Strand*)

THIS is the place. Even here the dauntless soul,
 The unflinching hand, wrought on ; till in that nook,
 As on that very bed, his life partook
 New birth, and passed. Yon river's dusky shoal,
 Whereto the close-built coiling lanes unroll,
 Faced his work-window, whence his eyes would stare,
 Thought-wandering, unto nought that met them there,
 But to the unfettered irreversible goal.

This cupboard, Holy of Holies, held the cloud
 Of his soul writ and limned ; this other one,
 His true wife's charge, full oft to their abode
 Yielded for daily bread the martyr's stone,
 Ere yet their food might be that Bread alone,
 The words now home-speech of the mouth of God.

THE DAY-DREAM

THE DAY-DREAM

(For a Picture)

THE thronged boughs of the shadowy sycamore
Still bear young leaflets half the summer through ;
From when the robin 'gainst the unhidden blue
Perched dark, till now, deep in the leafy core,
The embowered throstle's urgent wood-notes soar
Through summer silence. Still the leaves come new ;
Yet never rosy-sheathed as those which drew
Their spiral tongues from spring-buds heretofore.

Within the branching shade of Reverie
Dreams even may spring till autumn ; yet none be
Like woman's budding day-dream spirit-fann'd.
Lo ! tow'rd deep skies, not deeper than her look,
She dreams ; till now on her forgotten book
Drops the forgotten blossom from her hand.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

HIS Soul fared forth (as from the deep home-grove
The father-songster plies the hour-long quest),
To feed his soul-brood hungering in the nest ;
But his warm Heart, the mother-bird, above
Their callow fledgling progeny still hove
With tented roof of wings and fostering breast
Till the Soul fed the soul-brood. Richly blest
From Heaven their growth, whose food was Human Love.

Yet ah ! Like desert pools that show the stars
Once in long leagues,—even such the scarce-snatched hours
Which deepening pain left to his lordliest powers :—
Heaven lost through spider-trammelled prison-bars.
Six years, from sixty saved ! Yet kindling skies
Own them, a beacon to our centuries.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

FOR SPRING

BY SANDRO BOTTICELLI

(*In the Accademia of Florence*)

AT masque of what old wind-withered New-Year
honours this Lady? * Flora, wanton-eyed
For birth, and with all flowrets pranked and pied:
Aurora, Zephyrus, with mutual cheer
Of clasp and kiss: the Graces circling near,
'Neath bower-linked arch of white arms glorified:
And with those feathered feet which hovering glide
O'er Spring's brief bloom, Hermes the harbinger.

Birth-bare, not death-bare yet, the young stems stand
This Lady's temple-columns: o'er her head
Love wings his shaft. What mystery here is read
Of homage or of hope? But how command
Dead Springs to answer? And how question here
These mummers of that wind-withered New-Year?

FOR THE HOLY FAMILY

BY MICHELANGELO.

(*In the National Gallery †*)

TURN not the prophet's page, O Son! He knew
All that Thou hast to suffer, and hath writ.
Not yet Thine hour of knowledge. Infinite
The sorrows that Thy manhood's lot must rue
And dire acquaintance of Thy grief. That clue
The spirits of Thy mournful ministrings
Seek through yon scroll in silence. For these things
The angels have desired to look into.

Still before Eden waves the fiery sword,—
Her Tree of Life unransomed: whose sad Tree
Of Knowledge yet to growth of Calvary
Must yield its Tempter,—Hell the earliest dead
Of Earth resign,—and yet, O Son and Lord,
The seed o' the woman bruise the serpent's head.

* The same lady, here surrounded by the masque of Spring, is evidently the subject of a portrait by Botticelli formerly in the Pourtalès collection in Paris. This portrait is inscribed "Smeralda Bandinelli."

† In this picture the Virgin Mother is seen withholding from the Child Saviour the prophetic writings in which His sufferings are foretold. Angelic figures beside them examine a scroll.

TIBER, NILE, AND THAMES

THE head and hands of murdered Cicero,
 Above his seat high in the Forum hung,
 Drew jeers and burning tears. When on the rung
 Of a swift-mounted ladder, all aglow,
 Fulvia, Mark Antony's shameless wife, with show
 Of foot firm-poised and gleaming arm upflung,
 Bade her sharp needle pierce that god-like tongue
 Whose speech fed Rome even as the Tiber's flow.

And thou, Cleopatra's Needle, that hadst thrird
 Great skirts of Time ere she and Antony hid
 Dead hope!—hast thou too reached, surviving death,
 A city of sweet speech scorned,—on whose chill stone
 Keats withered, Coleridge pined, and Chatterton,
 Breadless, with poison froze the God-fired breath?

“ FOUND ”

(*For a Picture*)

“ THERE is a budding morrow in midnight : ”—
 So sang our Keats, our English nightingale.
 And here, as lamps across the bridge turn pale
 In London's smokeless resurrection-light,
 Dark breaks to dawn. But o'er the deadly blight
 Of Love deflowered and sorrow of none avail,
 Which makes this man gasp and this woman quail,
 Can day from darkness ever again take flight?

Ah! gave not these two hearts their mutual pledge,
 Under one mantle sheltered 'neath the hedge
 In gloaming courtship? And, O God! to-day
 He only knows he holds her;—but what part
 Can life now take? She cries in her locked heart,—
 “ Leave me—I do not know you—go away ! ”

CZAR ALEXANDER THE SECOND

(13TH MARCH 1881)

FROM him did forty million serfs, endow'd
 Each with six feet of death-due soil, receive
 Rich freeborn lifelong land, whereon to sheave
 Their country's harvest. These to-day aloud
 Demand of Heaven a Father's blood,—sore bow'd
 With tears and thrilled with wrath; who, while they grieve,
 On every guilty head would fain achieve
 All torment by his edicts disallow'd.

He stayed the knout's red-ravening fangs; and first
 Of Russian traitors, his own murderers go
 White to the tomb. While he,—laid foully low
 With limbs red-rent, with festering brain which erst
 Willed kingly freedom,—'gainst the deed accurst
 To God bears witness of his people's woe.

ALAS, SO LONG !

AH ! dear one, we were young so long,
 It seemed that youth would never go,
 For skies and trees were ever in song
 And water in singing flow
 In the days we never again shall know.
 Alas, so long !
 Ah ! then was it all Spring weather ?
 Nay, but we were young and together.

Ah ! dear one, I've been old so long,
 It seems that age is loth to part,
 Though days and years have never a song,
 And oh ! have they still the art
 That warmed the pulses of heart to heart ?
 Alas, so long !
 Ah ! then was it all Spring weather ?
 Nay, but we were young and together.

Ah ! dear one, you've been dead so long,—
 How long until we meet again,
 Where hours may never lose their song
 Nor flowers forget the rain
 In glad noonlight that never shall wane ?
 Alas, so long !
 Ah ! shall it be then Spring weather,
 And ah ! shall we be young together ?

INSOMNIA

THIN are the night-skirts left behind
 By daybreak hours that onward creep,
 And thin, alas ! the shred of sleep
 That wavers with the spirit's wind :
 But in half-dreams that shift and roll
 And still remember and forget,
 My soul this hour has drawn your soul
 A little nearer yet.

Our lives, most dear, are never near,
 Our thoughts are never far apart,
 Though all that draws us heart to heart
 Seems fainter now and now more clear.
 To-night Love claims his full control,
 And with desire and with regret
 My soul this hour has drawn your soul
 A little nearer yet.

Is there a home where heavy earth
 Melts to bright air that breathes no pain,
 Where water leaves no thirst again
 And springing fire is Love's new birth ?
 If faith long bound to one true goal
 May there at length its hope beget,
 My soul that hour shall draw your soul
 For ever nearer yet.

POSSESSION

THERE is a cloud above the sunset hill,
 That wends and makes no stay,
 For its goal lies beyond the fiery west ;
 A lingering breath no calm can chase away,
 The onward labour of the wind's last will ;
 A flying foam that overleaps the crest
 Of the top wave : and in possession still
 A further reach of longing ; though at rest
 From all the yearning years,
 Together in the bosom of that day
 Ye cling, and with your kisses drink your tears.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

(Inscription for the couch, still preserved, on which he passed the last night of his life.)

'Twixt those twin worlds,—the world of Sleep, which gave
 No dream to warn,—the tidal world of Death,
 Which the earth's sea, as the earth, replenisheth,—
 Shelley, Song's orient sun, to breast the wave,
 Rose from this couch that morn. Ah ! did he brave
 Only the sea ?—or did man's deed of hell
 Engulph his bark 'mid mists impenetrable ? . . .
 No eye discerned, nor any power might save.

When that mist cleared, O Shelley ! what dread veil
 Was rent for thee, to whom far-darkling Truth
 Reigned sovereign guide through thy brief ageless youth ?
 Was the Truth *thy* Truth, Shelley ?—Hush ! All-Hail !
 Past doubt, thou gav'st it ; and in Truth's bright sphere
 Art first of praisers, being most praised here.

RALEIGH'S CELL IN THE TOWER

HERE writ was the World's History by his hand
 Whose steps knew all the earth ; albeit his world
 In these few piteous paces then was furl'd.
 Here daily, hourly, have his proud feet spann'd
 This smaller speck than the receding land
 Had ever shown his ships ; what time he hurl'd
 Abroad o'er new-found regions spiced and pearl'd
 His country's high dominion and command.

Here dwelt two spheres. The vast terrestrial zone
 His spirit traversed ; and that spirit was
 Itself the zone celestial, round whose birth
 The planets played within the zodiac's girth ;
 Till hence, through unjust death unfeared, did pass
 His spirit to the only land unknown.

SPHERAL CHANGE

IN this new shade of Death, the show
Passes me still of form and face ;
Some bent, some gazing as they go,
Some swiftly, some at a dull pace,
Not one that speaks in any case.

If only one might speak !—the one
Who never waits till I come near ;
But always seated all alone
As listening to the sunken air,
Is gone before I come to her.

O dearest ! while we lived and died
A living death in every day,
Some hours we still were side by side,
When where I was you too might stay
And rest and need not go away.

O nearest, furthest ! Can there be
At length some hard-earned heart-won home,
Where,—exile changed for sanctuary,—
Our lot may fill indeed its sum,
And you may wait and I may come ?

VERSICLES AND FRAGMENTS

GOD'S GRAAL

THE ark of the Lord of Hosts
Whose name is called by the name of Him
Who dwelleth between the Cherubim.

O Thou that in no house dost dwell,
But walk'st in tent and tabernacle.

For God of all strokes will have one
In every battle that is done.

Lancelot lay beside the well :
 (God's Graal is good)
Oh my soul is sad to tell
The weary quest and the bitter quell ;
For he was the lord of lordlihood,
And sleep on his eyelids fell.

Lancelot lay before the shrine ;
 (The apple tree's in the wood)
There was set Christ's very sign,
The bread unknown and the unknown wine
That the soul's life for a livelihood
 Craves from his wheat and vine.

As much as in a hundred years, she's dead :
Yet is to-day the day on which she died.

ON BURNS

IN whomsoe'er, since Poesy began,
A Poet most of all men we may scan,
Burns of all poets is the most a Man.

THE ORCHARD-PIT

PILED deep below the screening apple-branch
They lie with bitter apples in their hands :
And some are only ancient bones that blanch,
And some had ships that last year's wind did launch,
And some were yesterday the lords of lands.

In the soft dell, among the apple-trees,
 High up above the hidden pit she stands,
 And there for ever sings, who gave to these,
 That lie below, her magic hour of ease,
 And those her apples holden in their hands.

This in my dreams is shown me ; and her hair
 Crosses my lips and draws my burning breath ;
 Her song spreads golden wings upon the air,
 Life's eyes are gleaming from her forehead fair,
 And from her breasts the ravishing eyes of Death.

Men say to me that sleep hath many dreams,
 Yet I knew never but this dream alone :
 There, from a dried-up channel, once the stream's,
 The glen slopes up ; even such in sleep it seems
 As to my waking sight the place well known.

* * * * *

My love I call her, and she loves me well :
 But I love her as in the maelstrom's cup
 The whirled stone loves the leaf inseparable
 That clings to it round all the circling swell,
 And that the same last eddy swallows up.

TO ART

I LOVED thee ere I loved a woman, Love,

FIOR DI MAGGIO

Oh ! May sits crowned with hawthorn-flower,
 And is Love's month, they say ;
 And Love's the fruit that is ripened best
 By ladies' eyes in May.

And the Sibyl, you know. I saw her with my own eyes at Cumæ, hanging in a jar ;
 and, when the boys asked her, " What would you, Sibyl ? " she answered, " I would die."
 —PETRONIUS.

" I SAW the Sibyl at Cumæ "
 (One said) " with mine own eye,
 She hung in a cage, and read her rune
 To all the passers-by.
 Said the boys, ' What wouldst thou, Sibyl ? '
 She answered, ' I would die.' "

As balmy as the breath of her you love
 When deep between her breasts it comes to you.

"WAS it a friend or foe that spread these lies?"
 "Nay, who but infants question in such wise?"
 'Twas one of my most intimate enemies."

IF I could die like the British Queen
 Who faced the Roman war,
 Or hang in a cage for my country's sake
 Like Black Bess of Dunbar!

SHE bound her green sleeve on my helm,
 Sweet pledge of love's sweet meed:
 Warm was her bared arm round my neck
 As well she bade me speed;
 And her kiss clings still between my lips,
 Heart's beat and strength at need.

WHERE is the man whose soul has never waked
 To sudden pity of the poor torn past?

AT her step the water-hen
 Springs from her nook, and skimming the clear stream,
 Ripples its waters in a sinuous curve,
 And dives again in safety.

WOULD God I knew there were a God to thank
 When thanks rise in me!

I SHUT myself in with my soul,
 And the shapes come eddying forth.

"I HATE" says over and above
 "This is a soul that I might love."
 None lightly says "My friend": even so
 Be jealous of that name "My foe."
 An enemy for an enemy,
 But dogs for what a dog can be.
 Hold those at heart, and time shall prove.

Do still thy best, albeit the clue
 Be snapt of that thou strovest to;
 Do still thy best, though direful hate
 Should toil to leave thee desolate.
 Do still thy best whom Fate would damn.
 Say—such as I was made I am,
 And did even such as I could do,

Anomalies against all rules
 Acknowledge, though beyond the schools:—

Those passionate states when to know true
 Some thing, and to believe, are two ;
 And that extraordinary sect
 Whom no amount of intellect
 Can save, alas, from being fools.

THE bitter stage of life
 Where friend and foe are parts alternated.

THE winter garden-beds all bare,
 Save only where the redbreast lingering there
 Brings back one flower-like gleam 'mid the dark mould.

WHO shall say what is said in me,
 With all that I might have been dead in me ?

WHO knoweth not love's sounds and silences ?

Where the poets all—
 Echoes of singing nature—list her call.

A BAD OMEN

ON the first day the priest
 Could find no heart in the beast,
 And two on the second day.

EVEN as the dreariest swamps, in sweet Springtide,
 Are most with Mary-flowers beatified.

OR reading in some sunny nook
 Where grass-blade shadows fall across your book.

AYE, we'll shake hands, though scarce for love, we two :
 But I hate hatred worse than I hate you.

AND heavenly things in your eyes have place,
 Those breaks of sky in the twilight face.

THOUGH all the rest go by—
 Ditties and dirges of the unanswering sky.

WHAT face but thine has taught me all that art
 Can be, and still be Nature's counterpart—
 The zodiac of all beauty ?

WITH furnaces
Of instant flame, and petals of pure light.

AND love and faith, the vehement heart of all.

FOR this can love, and does love, and loves me.
(or)
FOR this can love, and does, and loves but me.

THE forehead veiled and the veiled throat of Death.

THOU that beyond thy real self dost see
A self ideal, bid thy heart beware.

AND plaintive days that haunt the haggard hills
With bleak unspoken woe.

To know for certain that we do not know
Is the first step in knowledge.

THINK through this silence how when we are old
We two shall think upon this place and day.

AN ant-sting's prickly at first,
But the pain soon dies away ;
A gnat-sting's worse the next day ;
But a wasp 'tis stings the worst.

AND mad revulsion of the tarnished light.

His face, in Fortune's favours sunn'd,
Was radiantly rubicund.

THE glass stands empty of all things it knew.

O THOU whose name, being alone, aloud
I utter oft, and though thou art not there,
Toward thine imaged presence kiss the air.

I SAW the love which was my life flow past
'Twixt shadowed reaches, like a murmuring stream :—
I was awake, and lo it was a dream.

OR give ten years of life's most bitter wane
To see the loved one as she was again.

AND of the cup of human agony
Enough to fill the sea.

EVEN as the moon grows clearer on the sky
While the sky darkens, and her Venus-star
Thrills with a keener radiance from afar.

(THE Imperial Cloak—Paludamentum).
Imperatorial car,
And purple-dyed paludament of war.

MY LADY (CANZONE)

I'LL tell you of my Lady all I know ;
And, if my lady knew
That I would tell this, she would etc. etc.
And say, " Why, all is his, so let him tell."

She is full of incidents, like all beautiful Nature.

Then follow descriptive lines about her different attitudes, expressions, etc. Perhaps to wind up by saying that nothing one can say is so expressive of her as her own name, which means herself only : and that cannot be said for others to hear.

LAST LOVE (CANZONE)

LOVE hath a chamber all of imagery ;
And there is one dim nook,
A little storied web wherein my heart
From leaf to leaf is read as in a book.

One part in the middle of the web begun and left unfinished ; a face with ravelled threads falling over it and hiding it. Love says that the time has come to resume and finish this part of the web, though much has come between since it was begun.

FOR the garlands of heaven were all laid by,
And the Daylight sucked at the breasts of a Lie.

THE wounded hart and the dying swan
Were side by side
Where the rushes coil with the turn of the tide—
The hart and the swan.
(In the alternate stanzas—The swan and the hart.)

WITHIN those eyes the sedulous yearning throe,
 And all the evil of my heart
 A thousand times forgotten.

AH if you had been lost for many years,
 And from the dead to-day were risen again !

ON THE TWO BRIDAL-BIERS

How sweet a solace is the bridal-bed—
 Dawn as prepared, evening as hallowèd.

FASHIONED with intricate infinity.

AH dear one, we were young so long
 I thought that youth would never wane—
 Ah dear one, I've been old so long,
 How long until we meet again ?

JOAN OF ARC

THIS word had Merlin said from of old :—
 That out of the Oak Tree Shade
 In the day of France's direst dule,
 God's hand should send a Maid.

And where Domremy, by Burgundy,
 Sits crowned with its oakenshaw,
 Even there Joan d'Arc, the Maid of God's Ark,
 The light of the day first saw,

* * * * *

Where spirits go, what man may know ?
 Yet this may of man be said :—
 That, when Time is o'er and all hath sufficed,
 Shall the world's chief Christ-fire rise to Christ
 From the ashes of Joan the Maid.

THE tombless fossil of deep-buried days.

AND 'mid the budding branches' sway
 Our antlers met in battle-play
 When our fetlocks felt the Spring.

IN galliard gardens of strange aventine,
 Or sway of tidal night.

WHEN we are senseless grown, to make stones speak.

OR, stamped with the snake's coil, it be
 The imperial image of Eternity,

COULD Keats but have a day or two on earth
Once every year!

DÎS MANIBUS

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, whose honoured rôle
Was to be scribe to Nero's soul,
And make French flesh to creep and crow
O'er Carthaginian Salammbô,
Lies here—in body, as in the brain,
Like Morgue-corpsé tumid from the Seine.
What shall be writ above his grave?
Vitellius', Nero's dying stave?
"Fui Imperator," shall it flow,
Or "Qualis artifex pereo"?

"AH lads, I knew your father." What wide world
Of meaning in those words! They mean that he,
Being gone before, has known that mystery
From living Plato and Socrates fast-furl'd.

THIS little day—a bird that flew to me—
Has swiftly flown out of my hand again.
Ah have I listened to its fugitive strain
For what its tidings of the sky may be?

No ship came near: aloof with heed
They tacked, as still as death;
For round our walls the sea was dense
With reefs whose sharp circumference
Was the great stronghold's sure defence.

AND plaintive days that haunt the haggard hills
With bleak unspoken woe.

INEXPLICABLE blight
And mad revulsion of the tarnished light.

FOREIGN

(With some English Translations)

MOTTO TO THE CARD DEALER

AMBITION, Cupidité,
Et délicate Volupté,
Sont les sœurs de la Destinée
Après la vingt-première année.
Calendrier de la Vie, 1630.

MESSER DANTE A MESSER BRUNO

ESSENDO pazzo, il bue al guado intoppa,
E volta e sfugge e d'acqua và digiuno:
E tu, pittor, che come lui sei Bruno,
Temendo un detto, dici cosa zoppa.
Acqua di guado no, ma vino in coppa,
Domanda il labbro al timoroso core
Dovendo nominare il CREDITORE;
E manca il dir, chè la paura è troppa.
"Fatto" lo chiami; e più tremendo fatto
Che il creditore non dimostra il sole
Ad uomo sano, ovvero a bue ch'è matto.
Impazziti voltiamo le parole
Ieroglicamente in "gufo" o "gatto";
E l'uom non osa dir quel che gli duole.

CON manto d'oro, collana, ed anelli,
Le piace aver con quelli
Non altro che una rosa ai suoi capelli.

WITH golden mantle, rings, and necklace fair,
It likes her best to wear
Only a rose within her golden hair.

ROBE d'or, mais rien ne veut
Qu'une rose à ses cheveux.

A GOLDEN robe, yet will she wear
Only a rose in her golden hair.

FOR

AN OIL-PORTRAIT OF MRS. WILLIAM MORRIS

CONJUGE clara poetâ et præclarissima formâ,
Denique picturâ clara sit illa meâ.

THOMÆ FIDES

"DIGITUM tuum, Thoma,
Infer, et vide manûs !
Manum tuam, Thoma,
Affer, et mitte in latus."
"Dominus et Deus,
Deus," dixit,
"Et Dominus meus."

"Quia me vidisti,
Thoma, credidisti.
Beati qui non viderunt,
Thoma, et crediderunt."
"Dominus et Deus,
Deus," dixit,
"Et Dominus meus."

GIOVENTU E SIGNORIÀ

È GIOVINE il signore,
Ed ama molte cose,—
I canti, le rose,
La forza e l'amore.

Quel che più vuole
Ancor non osa :
Ahi più che il sole,
Più ch' ogni rosa,
La cara cosa,
Donna a gioire.

È giovine il signore,
Ed ama quelle cose
Che ardor dispose
In cuore all' amore.

Bella fanciulla,
Guardalo in viso ;
Non mancar nulla,
Motto o sorriso ;
Ma viso a viso
Guarda a gradire.

E giovine il signore,
 Ed ama tutte cose,
 Vezzose, gioiose,
 Tenenti all' amore.

Prendilo in braccio
 Adesso o mai;
 Per più mi taccio,
 Chè tu lo sai;
 Bacialo e l'avrai,
 Ma non lo dire.

È giovine il signore,
 Ed ama ben le cose
 Che Amor nascose,
 Che mostragli Amore.

Deh trionfando
 Non farne pruova;
 Ahimè! che quando
 Gioja più giova,
 Allor si trova
 Presso al finire.

E giovine il signore,
 Ed ama tante cose,
 Le rose, le spose,
 Quante gli dona Amore.

YOUTH AND LORDSHIP

(Italian Street-Song)

My young lord's the lover
 Of earth and sky above,
 Of youth's sway and youth's play,
 Of songs and flowers and love.

Yet for love's desire
 Green youth lacks the daring;
 Though one dream of fire,
 All his hours ensnaring,
 Burns the boy past bearing—
 The dream that girls inspire.

My young lord's the lover
 Of every burning thought
 That Love's will, that Love's skill
 Within his breast has wrought.

Lovely girl, look on him
 Soft as music's measure;
 Yield him, when you've won him,
 Joys and toys at pleasure;
 But to win your treasure,
 Softly look upon him.

My young lord's the lover
 Of every tender grace
 That woman, to woo man,
 Can wear in form or face.

Take him to your bosom
 Now, girl, or never;
 Let not your new blossom
 Of sweet kisses sever;
 Only guard for ever
 Your boast within your bosom.

My young lord's the lover
 Of every secret thing,
 Love-hidden, love-bidden
 This day to banqueting.

Lovely girl, with vaunting
 Never tempt to-morrow:
 From all shapes enchanting
 Any joy can borrow,
 Still the spectre Sorrow
 Rises up for haunting.

And now my lord's the lover
 Of ah! so many a sweet,—
 Of roses, of spouses,
 As many as love may greet.

PROSERPINA

(PER UN QUADRO)

LUNGI è la luce che in sù questo muro
 Rifrange appena, un breve istante scorta
 Del rio palazzo alla soprana porta.
 Lungi quei fiori d'Enna, O lido oscuro,
 Dal frutto tuo fatal che omai m'è duro.
 Lungi quel cielo dal tartareo manto
 Che quì mi cuopre: e lungi ah! lungi ah! quanto
 Le notti che saran dai dì che furo.

Lungi da me mi sento; e ognor sognando
 Cerco e ricerco, e resto ascoltatrice;
 E qualche cuore a qualche anima dice,
 (Di cui mi giunge il suon da quando in quando.
 Continuamente insieme sospirando,)—
 "Oimè per te, Proserpina infelice!"

PROSERPINA

(For a Picture)

Afar away the light that brings cold cheer
 Unto this wall,—one instant and no more
 Admitted at my distant palace-door.
 Afar the flowers of Enna from this drear
 Dire fruit, which, tasted once, must thrall me here.
 Afar those skies from this Tartarean grey
 That chills me: and afar, how far away,
 The nights that shall be from the days that were.

Afar from mine own self I seem, and wing
 Strange ways in thought, and listen for a sign:
 And still some heart unto some soul doth pine,
 (Whose sounds mine inner sense is fain to bring,
 Continually together murmuring.)—
 “Woe’s me for thee, unhappy Proserpine!”

LA BELLA MANO

(PER UN QUADRO)

O BELLA Mano, che ti lavi e piaci
 In quel medesimo tuo puro elemento
 Donde la Dea dell’ amoroso avvento
 Nacque, (e dall’ onda s’infuocar le faci
 Di mille inispegnibili fornaci):—
 Come a Venere a te l’oro e l’argento
 Offron gli Amori; e ognun riguarda attento
 La bocca che sorride e te che taci.

In dolce modo dove onor t’ invii
 Vattene adorna, e porta insiem fra tante
 Di Venere e di vergine sembante;
 Umilmente in luoghi onesti e pii
 Bianca e soave ognora; infin che sii,
 O Mano, mansueta in man d’amante.

LA BELLA MANO

(For a Picture)

O LOVELY hand, that thy sweet self dost lave
 In that thy pure and proper element,
 Whence erst the Lady of Love’s high advent
 Was born, and endless fires sprang from the wave:—
 Even as her Loves to her their offerings gave,
 For thee the jewelled gifts they bear; while each
 Looks to those lips, of music-measured speech
 The fount, and of more bliss than man may crave.

In royal wise ring-girt and bracelet-spann’d,
 A flower of Venus’ own virginity,
 Go shine among thy sisterly sweet band;
 In maiden-minded converse delicately
 Evermore white and soft; until thou be,
 O hand! heart-handsel’d in a lover’s hand.

BARCAROLA

PER carità,
 Mostrami amore :
 Mi punge il cuore,
 Ma non si sa
 Dove è amore.
 Che mi fa
 La bella età,
 Sè non si sa
 Come amerà ?
 Ahi me solingo !
 Il cuor mi stringo !
 Non più ramingo,
 Per carità !

Per carità,
 Mostra mi il cielo :
 Tutto è un velo,
 E non si sa
 Dove è il cielo.
 Se si sta
 Così colà,
 Non si sa
 Se non si va.
 Ahi me lontano !
 Tutto è in vano !
 Prendimi in mano,
 Per carità !

BARCAROLA

OLTRE tomba
 Qualche cosa ?
 È che ne dici ?
 Saremo felici ?
 Terra mai posa,
 E mar rimbomba.

BAMBINO FASCIATO

A PIPPO Pipistrello
 Farfalla la fanciulla :
 " O vedi quanto è bello
 Ridendo in questa culla !
 E noi l'abbiamo fatto,
 Noi due insiem d' un tratto,
 E senza noi fia nulla."

Et les larmes, comme le sang,
 Grisent ceux qui les font couler.

Pro hoste hostem, canes pro canibus affer.

IL faut que tu le tiennes pour dit,
Car je ne t'aime plus, ma mie.

DEL mare il susurro sonoro.

LA RICORDANZA

MAGGIOR dolore è ben la Ricordanza,
O nell' amaro inferno amena stanza ?

MEMORY

Is Memory most of miseries miserable,
Or the one flower of ease in bitterest hell ?

JUVENILIA AND GROTESQUES

ALGERNON STANHOPE

Sacred
To the Memory
of

ALGERNON R. G. STANHOPE
(natus est 1838—obiit 1847)

"THE silver cord is loosed," he said,
"The golden bowl is broken ;
A few more prayers having been prayed,
A few more love-words spoken,
I shall turn my face unto the wall,
And sleeping, not be woken."

"Is it a better place, my child,
That thou art gone unto ?
Upon this earth that thou hast left
Hadst thou not much to do ?
Would not thy joys have been a crowd
And thy troubles small and few ?

"Beauty and rank and friends and wealth,
Genius and excellence,—
Could not all these, thy heritage,
Win thee from hastening hence ?
Was the soul so much more unto thee
Than joys of mind and sense ?

"And, bending with an English grace,
The ladies of our isle,
With their soft curls and their virgin eyes
Which look so sweet the while,
Had given thee for thy nobleness
A precious golden smile.

"These will not now be thine : thy life's
Appointed period
Being past o'er, thou liest on
The folded pinions broad
Of the Seraph who is bearing thee
Up through the sun to God.

"It has a solemn sound—'to God';
 And strange high thoughts it weaves
 Of a garden where the Tree of Life
 Its mystic shadow gives,
 And the music of the rapid worlds
 Is the wind that stirs the leaves.

"Surely, it *is* a better place:
 Wealth shuts not there his ken
 From woes his heart yearns to assuage;
 Nor noble origin
 Wounds him by lessening trust betwixt
 Him and his fellow-men.

"Nor friends die from him, but instead
 Come to him where he is;
 Nor Passion, rank with evil joys
 And worse satieties,
 Pouting her crimson lips at him
 Layeth her cheek to his.

"Nor priests be there, like a bad dream
 That at your bed's foot stands
 All night (and yet it goes at last);
 Nor moans of king-curst lands
 Make his breast heave and his pale brow
 To drop into his hands.

"But Love walks always with him now;
 And Faith, not chained but free;
 And Hope, bent forward, and with hair
 Held back continually
 To hear the distant chariot-wheels;
 And wise calm Charity."

AN EPITAPH FOR KEATS

THROUGH one, years since hanged and forgot
 Who stabbed backs by the Quarter,
 Here lieth one who—while Time's stream
 Runneth, as God hath taught her,
 Bearing man's fame to men,—will have
 His great name writ in water.

TO MARY IN SUMMER

LAY your head here, Mary,
 Lay your head here,
 While the blown grass, Mary,
 With timid voice and wary,
 Sings in your ear:—

The grass which round us, Mary,
 Shuts like a nest;
 By your dear limbs, dear Mary,
 Lighter than limbs of Faery,
 Daintily press'd.

Back with it all though, Mary,
 Back and aside ;
 The wind comes this way, Mary,
 And here the trees are airy
 And the skies are wide.

What do your eyes fear, Mary,
 So grave and soft ?
 I love to see them, Mary,
 In whimsical vagary
 Lifted aloft.

Mary, Mary, Mary,
 Laugh in my face :
 You know now, my own Mary,
 No eyes can laugh so rarely
 Or grant such grace.

Your cheek is pale now, Mary,
 And red, by turns.
 Why should the hand be chary
 Of that to give which, Mary,
 The heart so yearns ?

Give me your hand, ah Mary,
 Give me your hand :
 In city or in prairie
 There is none kinder, Mary,
 From land to land.

Your lips to my lips, Mary,
 Your lips to mine :
 High up in Hebe's dairy
 No milk so sweet, my Mary,
 On earth no wine.

Lay your head here, Mary,
 Lay your head here ;
 While my heart now, Mary,
 The pleasant tune to vary,
 Beats in your ear.

THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION OF 1848

(No connection with over the way)

"Some unprincipled persons endeavour to impose upon the public by such phrases as 'It's all one,' 'It's the same concern,' etc."—*Moses & Son.*

Ho ye that nothing have to lose ! ho rouse ye, one and all !
 Come from the sinks of the New Cut, the purlieus of Vauxhall !
 Did ye not hear the mighty sound boom by ye as it went—
 The Seven Dials strike the hour of man's enfranchisement ?

Ho cock your eyes, my gallant pals, and swing your heavy staves :
 Remember—Kings and Queens being out, the great cards will be
 Knaves.

And when the pack is ours—oh then at what a slapping pace
 Shall the tens be trodden down to five, and the fives kicked down
 to ace !

It was but yesterday the *Times* and *Post* and *Telegraph*
Told how from France King Louy-Phil. was shaken out like chaff;
To-morrow, boys, the *National*, the *Siècle*, and the *Débats*,
Shall have to tell the self-same tale of "La Reine Victoria."

What! shall our incomes we've not got be taxed by puny John?
Shall the policeman keep Time back by bidding us move on?
Shall we too follow in the steps of that poor sneak Cochrane?
Shall it be said, "They came, they saw,—and bolted back again"?

Not so! albeit great men have been among us, and are floor'd—
(Frost, Williams, Jones, and other ones who now reside abroad)—
Among the master-spirits of the age there still are those
Who'll pick up fame—even though, when smelt, it makes men hold
the nose.

What ho there! clear the way! make room for him, the "fly" and
wise,
Who wrote in mystic grammar about London's "Mysteries,"—
For him who takes a proud delight to wallow in our kennels,—
For Mr. A. B. C. D. E. F. G. M. W. Reynolds!

Come, hoist him up! his pockets will afford convenient hold
To grab him by; and, if inside there silver is or gold,
And should it be found sticking to our hands when they're drawn out,
Why, 'twere a chance not fair to say ill-natured things about.

Silence! Hear, hear! He says that we're the sovereign people, we!
And now? And now he states the fact that one and one make three!
Now he makes casual mention of a certain Miscellany!
He says that he's the editor! He says it costs a penny!

O thou great Spirit of the World! shall not the lofty things
He saith be borne unto all time for noble lessonings?
Shall not our sons tell to their sons what we could do and dare
In this the great year Forty-eight and in Trafalgar Square?

Swathed in foul wood, yon column stood 'mid London's thousand
marts;
And at their wine Committeemen grinned as they drank "The Arts":
But our good flint-stones have bowled down each poster-hidden board,
And from their hoarded malice our strong hands have stript the hoard.

Yon column is a prouder thing than Cæsar's triumph-arch!
It shall be called "The Column of the Glorious Days of March!"
And stonemasons' apprentices shall grow rich men therewith,
By contract-chiselling the names of Jones and Brown and Smith,

Upon what point of London, say, shall our next vengeance burst?
Shall the Exchange, or Parliament, be immolated first?
Which of the Squares shall we burn down?—which of the Palaces?
(The speaker is nailed by a policeman)
Oh please sir, don't! It isn't me. It's him. Oh don't, sir, please!

THE SIN OF DETECTION

SHE bowed her face among them all, as one
 By one they rose and went. A little scorn
 They showed—a very little. More forlorn
 She seemed because of that: she might have grown
 Proud else in her turn, and have so made known
 What she well knew—that the free-hearted corn,
 Kissed by the hot air freely all the morn,
 Is better than the weed which has its own
 Foul glut in secret. Both her white breasts heaved
 Like heaving water with their weight of lace;
 And her long tresses, full of musk and myrrh,
 Were shaken from the braids her fingers weaved,
 So that they hid the shame in her pale face.
 Then I stepped forth, and bowed addressing her.

AFTERWARDS

SHE opened her moist crimson lips to sing;
 And from her throat that is so white and full
 The notes leaped like a fountain. A smooth lull
 Was o'er my heart: as when—a viol-string
 Having been broken—the first musical ring
 Once over, all the rest is but a dull
 Crude dissonance, howe'er thou twist and pull
 The sundered fragments. A most weary thing
 It is within the perished heart to seek
 Pain, and not find it, but a clinging pall
 Like sleep upon the mind. The mere set plan
 Of life then comes, and grief that is not weak
 Because it has no tears. Life's all-in-all
 Was certainly at end when this began.

ONE OF TIME'S RIDDLES

IN her deep bosom the pride settled down—
 That pride which is a brackish thing like salt;
 And the life in her pulses seemed to halt.
 About her temples for an iron crown
 She set stern patience. She did never frown,
 But her long gaze was gentle to a fault;
 And, looking deep into her eyes, you had call'd
 Their lustre nothing but a mild clear brown.
 She lives and moves and is a mystery.
 That which she hath been the thought cannot touch;
 Only, beholding what she is, it hath
 Glimpses of something she is yet to be;
 And at the least it knows of her thus much:—
 She bides her season with a solemn faith,

ANOTHER LOVE

OF her I thought who now is gone so far :
 And, the thought passing over, to fall thence
 Was like a fall from spirit into sense
 Or from the heaven of heavens to sun and star.
 None other than Love's self ordained the bar
 'Twixt her and me ; so that if, going hence,
 I met her, it could only seem a dense
 Film of the brain,—just nought, as phantoms are.

Now when I passed your threshold and came in,
 And glanced where you were sitting, and did see
 Your tresses in these braids and your hands thus,—
 I knew that other figure, grieved and thin,
 That seemed there, yea that was there, could not be,
 Though like God's wrath it stood dividing us.

THE WORLD'S DOING

ONE scarce would think that we can be the same
 Who used, in those first childish Junes, to creep
 With held breath through the underwood, and leap
 Outside into the sun. Since this mine aim
 Took me unto itself, the joy which came
 Into my eyes at once sits hushed and deep ;
 Nor even the sorrow moans, but falls asleep
 And has ill dreams. For you—your very name
 Seems altered in mine ears, and cannot send
 Heat through my heart, as in those days afar
 Wherein we lived indeed with the real life.
 Yet why should we feel shame, my dear sweet friend ?
 Are they most honoured who without a scar
 Pace forth, all trim and fresh, from the splashed strife ?

ALMOST OVER

You say I should not think upon her now :
 But then I have stood beside her listening,
 And watched her rose-breathed lips when she would sing :
 And I can scarcely yet imagine how
 I ever should despise that stately brow
 And flowering breast that is so pure a thing.
 Alas for all the weary blood-running
 When from the heart love strives to tear a vow !

And yet perchance—even as you tell me—soon
 Her spirit of my spirit will leave hold,
 And, when I hear her tread, I shall not blush
 Doubly, for love and shame. But then the moon
 Assuredly will rise, and Sleep shall fold
 Her hair round me, and Death will whisper Hush !

HIDDEN HARMONY

THE thoughts in me are very calm and high
That think upon your love: yet by your leave
You shall not greatly marvel that this eve
Or nightfall—yet scarce nightfall—the strong sky
Leaves me thus sad. Now if you ask me why,
I cannot teach you, dear; but I believe
It is that man will always interweave
Life with fresh want, with wish or fear to die.

It may be therefore,—though the matter touch
Nowise our love,—that I so often look
Sad in your presence, often feeling so.
And of the reason I can tell thus much:—
Man's soul is like the music in a book
Which were not music but for high and low.

AN ALTAR-FLAME

EVEN as when utter summer makes the grain
Bow heavily along through the whole land
It seems to me whatever while I stand
Where thou art standing; and upon my brain
Thy presence weighs like a most awful strain
Of music, heard in some cathedral fanned
With the deep breath of prayer, while the priest's hand
Uplifts the solemn sign which shall remain
After the world. Thy beauty perfecteth
A noble calmness in me; it doth send
Through my weak heart to my strong mind a rule
Of life that they shall keep till shut of death:
Death—an arched path too long to see the end,
But which hath shadows that seem pure and cool.

HEIGHT IN DEPTH

HE turned his face apart, and gave a sigh
And a strange whimper—such a pitiful thing
As haunts the heart for days. "Yes, Love can bring
Unto a pass so low that it seems high:
And, when we see a brave and strong man cry
With a poor infant's feeble sorrowing,
It is a nobler passion than to wing
Shafts of small angers and small prides," thought I.

There is a love so deaf that it can hear
Not even its own voice which bids it seek
A name for its own meanness: it would find
The outlet else. But thus it is a sheer
Humility—an earnestness so meek
That your knees bow and sharp tears make you blind.

AT ISSUE

THAT voice I hear,—how heard I cannot tell,—
 Although my home is this, seems from my home :
 There . . . still it trails along and murmurs "Come" ;
 Like the slow death of sound within a bell,
 Or like the humming whine in some pink shell
 Wet with the brittle beadage of the foam
 Which bird-eyed damsels stoop for when they roam
 By the old sea. Were't not exceeding well
 To shake my soul out of this tiresome life
 For a call any-whence and any-whither ?
 That voice knows all the life I have or had,
 And mocks me not,—it's whisper is too sad.
 Even to attain calm sorrow lures me thither,
 Since here this search for joy wearies like strife.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

DOUBT spake no word in me as there I kneeled.
 Loathing, I could not praise : I could not thank
 God for the cup of evil that I drank :
 I dared not cry upon His strength to shield
 My soul from weapons it was bent to wield
 Itself against itself. And so I sank
 Into the furnished phrases smooth and blank
 Which we all learn in childhood,—and did yield
 A barren prayer for life. My voice might mix
 With hers, but mingled not. Hers was a full
 Grand burst of music, which the crownèd Seven
 Must have leaned sideways from their seats to fix
 In their calm minds. The seraph-songs fell dull
 Doubtless, when heard again, throughout all heaven.

THE TURNING-POINT

At length I sickened, standing in the sun
 Truthful and for the Truth, whose only fees
 Are madness and sharp death. I bowed my knees
 And said : " As long as the world's years have run,
 These accents have been said and these things done :
 That which is mine abasement is their ease :
 They say, ' Go to—all this is as we please :
 Shall we, being many, step aside for one ? '

" And thus it is that though the air be new,
 And my brow finds the coolness it hath sought
 Through the slow-stricken night,—the daily curse
 Weighs on my soul of what I waken to :
 For though I loathe the price, this must be bought."
 . . . Thou fool ! Would'st *buy* from man what God *confers* ?

A FORETASTE

At length the *then* of my long hope was *now* ;
 Yet had my spirit an extreme unrest :
 I knew the good from better was grown best
 At length, but could not just as yet tell how.
 So I lay straight along, and thrust my brow
 Under the heights of grass. Hours struck. The West,
 I knew, must be at change ; but gazed not, lest
 The heat against my naked face (no bough
 For shade) should tease me mad, like poisoned spice.
 I lay along, letting my whole self think,
 Pressing my brow down that the thoughts might fix :
 Just as a dicer who holds loaded dice,
 Sure of his cast, keeps trifling with his drink
 Ere he will throw, and still must taste and mix.

IDLE BLESSEDNESS

I know not how it is, I have the knack,
 In lazy moods, of seeking no excuse ;
 But holding that man's ease must be the juice
 Of man's philosophy, I give the sack
 To thought, and lounge at shuffle on the track
 Of what employment seems of the least use :
 And in such ways I find a constant sluice
 For drowzy humours. Be thou loth to rack
 And hack thy brain for thought, which *may* lurk there
 Or may not. Without pain of thought, the eyes
 Can see, the ears can hear, the sultry mouth
 Can taste the summer's favour. Towards the South
 Let earth sway round, while this my body lies
 In warmth, and has the sun on face and hair.

" 'T WAS THUS "

" 'T WAS thus, thus is, and thus shall be :
 The Beautiful—the Good—
 Still mirror to the Human Soul
 Its own intensitude ! "

A PRAYER

LADY, in thy proud eyes
 There is a weary look,
 As if the spirit we know through them
 Were daunted with rebuke
 To think that the heart of man henceforth
 Is read like a read book.

Lady, in thy lifted face
 The solitude is sore ;
 The true solitude follows the crowd.
 Will it be less or more
 When the words have been spoken to thee
 Which my heart is seeking for ?

JUVENILIA AND GROTESQUES

Lady, canst thou not guess
 The words which my thoughts seek?
 Perhaps thou deem'st them well to spurn
 And better not to speak.
 Oh thou must know my love is strong,
 Hearing my voice so weak.

Lady, ah go not thus:
 Lady, give ear again:
 Lady, oh learn from me that yet
 There may one thing remain
 Which stands not in the knowledge thou hast
 And in thy lore of men.

Lady, the darkness lasteth long
 Ere the dawn touch the skies;
 Many are the leagues of wilderness
 Till ye come where the green lies;
 Nay often betwixt doubt and doubt
 Death whispers and makes wise.

Lady, has not my thought
 Dared much? For I would be
 The ending of darkness and the dawn
 Of a new day to thee,
 And thine oasis, and thy place of rest,
 And thy time of peace, lady.

ON BROWNING'S SORDELLO

"SORDELLO's story," the Sphinx yawned and said,
 "Who would has heard." Is that enough? Who could,
 'Twere not amiss to add, has understood:
 Who understood perhaps has profited.
 For my part I could tell a tale instead
 Of one who, dreaming of no likelihood
 Even that the "Book" was going to end for good,
 Turned the last page, and lo the book was read.

* * * *

THE CAN-CAN AT VALENTINO'S

(N.B.—The numerical characteristics refer to the *danseuses*.)

THE first, a mare; the second, 'twixt bow-wow
 And pussy-cat, a cross; the third, a beast
 To baffle Buffon; the fourth, not the least
 In hideousness, nor last; the fifth, a cow;
 The sixth, Chimera; the seventh, Sphinx; . . . Come now,
 One woman, France, ere this frog-hop have ceased,
 And it shall be enough. A toothsome feast
 Of blackguardism . . . and bald row,
 No doubt for such as love those same. For me,
 I confess, William, and avow to thee,
 (Soft in thine ear) that such sweet female whims
 * * * * *
 Are not a passion of mine naturally.
 * * * * *

AT THE STATION OF THE VERSAILLES RAILWAY

I WAITED for the train unto Versailles.
 I hung with *bonnes* and *gamins* on the bridge
 Watching the gravelled road where, ridge with ridge,
 Under black arches gleam the iron rails
 Clear in the darkness, till the darkness fails
 And they press on to light again—again
 To reach the dark. I waited for the train
 Unto Versailles; I leaned over the bridge,
 And wondered, cold and drowsy, why the knave
 Claude is in worship; and why (sense apart)
 Rubens preferred a mustard vehicle.
 The wind veered short. I turned upon my heel
 Saying, "Correggio was a toad"; then gave
 Three dizzy yawns, and knew not of the Art.

L'ENVOI: BRUSSELS, HÔTEL DU MIDI

18 October

It's copied out at last: very poor stuff
 Writ in the cold, with pauses of the cramp.
 Direct, dear William, to the Poste Restante
 At Ghent—here written Gand—Gong, Hunticè.
 We go to Antwerp first, but shall not stay;
 After, to Ghent and Bruges; and after that
 To Ostend, and thence home. To Waterloo
 Was yesterday. Thither, and there, and back,
 I managed to scrawl something,—most of it
 Bad, and the sonnet at the close mere slosh.
 'Twas only made because I was knocked up,
 And it helped yawning. Take it, and the rest.

SIR PETER PAUL RUBENS (ANTWERP)

"*Messieurs, le Dieu des peintres*": We felt odd:
 'Twas Rubens, sculptured. A mean florid church
 Was the next thing we saw,—from vane to porch
His drivel. The museum: as we trod
 Its steps, his bust held us at bay. The clod
 Has slosh by miles along the wall within.
 ("I say, I somehow feel my gorge begin
 To rise.")—His chair in a glass case, by God!
 . . . To the Cathedral. Here too the vile snob
 Has fouled in every corner. ("Wherefore brave
 Our fate? Let's go.") There is a monument
 We pass. "Messieurs, you tread upon the grave
 Of the great Rubens." "Well, that's one good job!
 What time this evening is the train for Ghent?"

BETWEEN GHENT AND BRUGES

(Wednesday night, 24 October)

Ah yes, exactly so ; but when a man
 Has trundled out of England into France
 And half through Belgium, always in this prance
 Of steam, and still has stuck to his first plan—
 Blank verse or sonnets ; and as he began
 Would end ;—why, even the blankest verse may chance
 To falter in default of circumstance,
 And even the sonnet miss its mystic span.
 Trees will be trees, grass grass, pools merely pools,
 Unto the end of time and Belgium—points
 Of fact which Poets (very abject fools)
 Get scent of—once their epithets grown tame
 And scarce. Even to these foreign rails—my joints
 Begin to find their jolting much the same.

VERSES TO JOHN TUPPER

DEAR Jack
 Alack !
 A few days back
 I bound myself by oath to smack
 My lips o'er sloshy tea, and attack
 White, brown, or black
 Bread, and vile jokes to crack,
 This night with brutes whose knack
 Would squeeze a pun in Syriac.
 And for to-morrow, alack !
 I have a model on my track,
 So that I may not pack.
 Of course I writhe upon the rack :
 Though as to NATURE, Jack,
 (Poor dear old hack !)
 Touching sky, sun, stone, stick, and stack,
 I guess I'm half a quack ;
 For whom ten lines of Browning whack
 The whole of the Zodiac.
 Nevertheless, alack !
 Seeing this time I must send back
 To Prince and Baron, Stephens and Jack
 (Spec-cadav Rex, hic hæc hoc hac),
 And to the Maniac,
 The SACK.
 This much from D. G. R. (in black,
I.e., with coal-ash cloth-of-sack.)

ST. WAGNES' EVE

THE hōp-shop is shut up : the night doth wear,
 Here, early, Collinson this evening fell
 " Into the gulfs of sleep " ; and Deverell
 Has turned upon the pivot of his chair
 The whole of this night long ; and Hancock there
 Has laboured to repeat, in accents screechy,
 " Guardami ben, ben son, ben son Beatrice " ;
 And Bernhard Smith still beamed, serene and square.
 By eight, the coffee was all drunk. At nine
 We gave the cat some milk. Our talk did shelve,
 Ere ten, to gasps and stupor. Helpless grief
 Made, towards eleven, my inmost spirit pine,
 Knowing North's hour. And Hancock, hard on twelve,
 Showed an engraving of his bas-relief.

PARODY ON "UNCLE NED"

DERE was an old nigger, and him name was Uncle Tom,
 And him tale was rather slow ;
 Me try to read de whole, but me only read some,
 Because me found it no go.

Den hang up de auther Mrs. Stowe,
 And kick de volume wid your toe—
 And dere's no more public for poor Uncle Tom,
 He am gone whar de trunk-lining go.

Him tale dribbles on and on widout a break,
 Till you hab no eyes for to see ;
 When I reached Chapter 4 I had got a headache,
 So I had to let Chapter 4 be.
 Den hang up, etc.

De demand one fine morning for Uncle Tom died,
 De tears down Mrs. Stowe's face ran like rain ;
 For she knew berry well, now dey'd laid him on de shelf,
 Dat she'd neber get a publisher again.
 Den hang up, etc.

DUNS SCOTUS

HERE lies Duns Scotus
 Who died of lotus.

MACCRACKEN

(Parody on Tennyson's "Kraken")

GETTING his pictures, like his supper, cheap,
 Far, far away in Belfast by the sea,
 His watchful one-eyed uninvasion sleep
 MacCracken sleepeth. While the P.R.B.
 Must keep the shady side, he walks a swell
 Through spungings of perennial growth and height :
 And far away in Belfast out of sight,
 By many an open do and secret sell,
 Fresh daubers he makes shift to scarify,
 And fleece with pliant shears the slumbering "green."
 There he has lied, though aged, and will lie,
 Fattening on ill-got pictures in his sleep,
 Till some Præraphael prove for him too deep.
 Then, once by Hunt and Ruskin to be seen,
 Insolvent he will turn, and in the Queen's Bench die.

VALENTINE—TO LIZZIE SIDDAL

YESTERDAY was St. Valentine.
 Thought you at all, dear dove divine,
 Upon the beard in sorry trim
 And rueful countenance of him,
 That Orson who's your Valentine ?

He daubed, you know, as usual.
 The stick would slip, the brush would fall :
 Yet daubed he till the lamplighter
 Set those two seedy flames astir ;
 But growled all day at slow St. Paul.

The bore was heard ere noon ; the dun
 Was at the door by half-past one :
 At least 'tis thought so, but the clock—
 No Lizzy there to help its stroke—
 Struck work before the day begun.

At length he saw St. Paul's bright orb
 Flash back—the serried tide absorb
 That burning West which it sucked up,
 Like wine poured in a water cup ;—
 And one more twilight toned his daub.

Some time over the fire he sat,
 So lonely that he missed his cat ;
 Then wildly rushed to dine on tick,—
 Nine minutes swearing for his stick,
 And thirteen minutes for his hat.

And now another day is gone :
Once more that intellectual one
Desists from high-minded pursuits,
And hungry, staring at his boots,
Has not the strength to pull them on.

Come back, dear Liz, and looking wise
In that arm-chair which suits your size
Through some fresh drawing scrape a hole.
Your Valentine & Orson's soul
Is sad for those two friendly eyes.

ADDRESS TO THE DALZIEL BROTHERS

"O WOODMAN, spare that block,
Oh gash not anyhow !
It took ten days by clock,
I'd fain protect it now."

Chorus—Wild Laughter from Dalziel's Workshop.

THE WOMBAT

OH how the family affections combat
Within this heart, and each hour flings a bomb at
My burning soul ! Neither from owl nor from bat
Can peace be gained until I clasp my wombat.

LIMERICKS

THERE is a big artist named Val,
The roughs' and the prize-fighters' pal :
The mind of a groom
And the head of a broom
Were Nature's endowments to Val.

There is a Creator named God
Whose creations are sometimes quite odd :
I maintain—and I shall—
The creation of Val
Reflects little credit on God.

There is a dull Painter named Wells
Who is duller than any one else :
With the face of a horse
He sits by you and snorts—
Which is very offensive in Wells.

There's an infantine Artist named Hughes—
Him and his the R.A.'s did refuse :
At length, though, among
The lot, one was hung—
But it was himself in a noose.

JUVENILIA AND GROTESQUES

There's a babyish party named Burges
 Who from infancy hardly emerges :
 If you had not been told
 He's disgracefully old,
 You would offer a bull's-eye to Burges.

There is a young person named Georgie
 Who indulges each night in an orgy :
 Soda-water and brandy
 Are always kept handy
 To efface the effects of that orgy.

There is a young Artist named Jones
 Whose conduct no genius atones :
 His behaviour in life
 Is a pang to the wife
 And a plague to the neighbours of Jones.

There is a young Painter called Jones
 (A cheer here, and hisses, and groans) :
 The state of his mind
 Is a shame to mankind,
 But a matter of triumph to Jones.

There's a Painter of Portraits named Chapman
 Who in vain would catch woman or trap man
 To be painted life-size
 More preposterous guys
 Than they care to be painted by Chapman.

There's a combative Artist named Whistler
 Who is, like his own hog-hairs, a bristler :
 A tube of white lead
 And a punch on the head
 Offer varied attractions to Whistler.

There's a publishing party named Ellis
 Who's addicted to poets with bellies :
 He has at least two—
 One in fact, one in view—
 And God knows what will happen to Ellis.

There's a Portuguese person named Howell
 Who lays-on his lies with a trowel :
 Should he give-over lying,
 'Twill be when he's dying,
 For living is lying with Howell.

There is a mad Artist named Inchbold
 With whom you must be at a pinch bold :
 Or else you may score
 The brass plate on your door
 With the name of J. W. Inchbold.

A Historical Painter named Brown
 Was in manners and language a clown :
 At epochs of victual
 Both *pudden* and *kittle*
 Were expressions familiar to Brown.

There was a young rascal called Nolly
Whose habits though dirty were jolly ;
And when this book comes
To be marked with his thumbs
You may know that its owner is Nolly.

There are dealers in pictures named Agnew
Whose soft soap would make an old rag new :
The Father of Lies
With his tail to his eyes
Cries—"Go it, Tom Agnew, Bill Agnew !"

There's a solid fat German called Huffer
A hypochondriacal buffer :
To declaim Schopenhauer
From the top of a tower
Is the highest ambition of Huffer.

There's a Scotch correspondent named Scott
Thinks a penny for postage a lot :
Books, verses, and letters,
Too good for his betters,
Cannot screw out an answer from Scott.

There's a foolish old Scotchman called Scotus,
Most justly a Pictor Ignotus :
For what he best knew
He never would do,
This stubborn [old] donkey called Scotus.

There once was a painter named Scott
Who seemed to have hair, but had not.
He seemed too to have sense :
'Twas an equal pretence
On the part of the painter named Scott.

There's the Irishman Arthur O'Shaughnessy—
On the chessboard of poets a pawn is he :
Though a bishop or king
Would be rather the thing
To the fancy of Arthur O'Shaughnessy.

There is a young Artist named Knewstub,
Who for personal cleaning will use tub :
But in matters of paint
Not the holiest Saint
Was ever so dirty as Knewstub.

There is a poor sneak called Rossetti :
As a painter with many kicks met he—
With more as a man—
But sometimes he ran,
And that saved the rear of Rossetti.

As a critic, the Poet Buchanan
Thinks Pseudo much safer than Anon.
Into Maitland he shrunk,
But the smell of the skunk
Guides the shuddering nose to Buchanan.

ON WILLIAM MORRIS

ENTER Skald, moored in a punt,
And jacks and tenches exeunt.

THE BROTHERS :

BY A SCOTCH BARD AND ENGLISH REVIEWER

I AM two brothers with one face,
So which is the real man who can trace ?
(My wrongs are raging inside of me.)
Here are some poets and they sell,
Therefore revenge becomes me well.
(Oh Robert-Thomas is dread to see.)

Of course you know it's a burning shame,
But of my last books the press makes game !
(My wrongs are boiling inside of me.)
So at least all other bards I'll slate
Till no one sells but the Laureate.
(Oh Robert-Thomas is dread to see.)

I took a beast of a poet's tome
And nailed a cheque, and brought them home ;
(My wrongs were howling inside of me.)
And after supper, in lieu of bed,
I wound wet towels round my head.
(Oh Robert-Thomas is dread to see.)

Of eyelids kissed and all the rest,
And rosy cheeks that lie on one's breast,
(My wrongs were yelling inside of me.)
I told the worst that pen can tell,—
And Strahan and Company loved me well.
(Oh Robert-Thomas is dread to see.)

I crowed out loud in the silent night,
I made my digs so sharp and bright :
(My wrongs were gnashing inside of me.)
In our Contemptible Review
I struck the beggar through and through.
(Oh Robert-Thomas is dread to see.)

I tanned his hide and combed his head,
And that bard, for one, I left for dead.
(My wrongs are hooting inside of me.)
And now he's wrapped in a printer's sheet,
Let's fling him at our Public's feet.
(Oh Robert-Thomas is dread to see.)

SMITHEREENS

UNCERTAIN-AGED Miss Thereabouts,
Tough fossil of her teens,
Has lifted up with saving hand
The ruined Smithereens.

Down the dark steps of debt that hand
Sped like an angel's wing,
Deep-dowered with gold, and for itself
Brought back a golden ring.

Ah lovely Lucy Lovandove,
That ring's a snake, and means
Woe without end : therein lies crushed
Thy heart—to smithereens.

ON CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

THERE's a female bard, grim as a fakier,
Who daily grows shakier and shakier.

TRANSLATIONS

DANTE AND HIS CIRCLE

WITH THE ITALIAN POETS PRECEDING HIM
(1100—1200—1300)

A COLLECTION OF LYRICS
TRANSLATED IN THE ORIGINAL METRES

PART I

DANTE'S VITA NUOVA, etc.
POETS OF DANTE'S CIRCLE

PART II

POETS CHIEFLY BEFORE DANTE

TO MY MOTHER
I DEDICATE THIS NEW EDITION
OF A BOOK PRIZED BY HER LOVE

Advertisement to the Edition of 1874

IN re-entitling and re-arranging this book (originally published in 1861 as *The Early Italian Poets*,) my object has been to make more evident at a first glance its important relation to Dante. The *Vita Nuova*, together with the many among Dante's lyrics and those of his contemporaries which elucidate their personal intercourse, are here assembled, and brought to my best ability into clear connection, in a manner not elsewhere attempted even by Italian or German editors.

Preface to the First Edition (1861)

I NEED not dilate here on the characteristics of the first epoch of Italian Poetry; since the extent of my translated selections is sufficient to afford a complete view of it. Its great beauties may often remain unapproached in the versions here attempted; but, at the same time, its imperfections are not all to be charged to the translator. Among these I may refer to its limited range of subject and continual obscurity, as well as to its monotony in the use of rhymes or frequent substitution of assonances. But to compensate for much that is incomplete and inexperienced, these poems possess, in their degree, beauties of a kind which can never again exist in art; and offer, besides, a treasure of grace and variety in the formation of their metres. Nothing but a strong impression, first of their poetic value, and next of the biographical interest of some of them (chiefly of those in my first division), would have inclined me to bestow the time and trouble which have resulted in this collection.

Much has been said, and in many respects justly, against the value of metrical translation. But I think it would be admitted that the tributary art might find a not illegitimate use in the case of poems which come down to us in such a form as do these early Italian ones. Struggling originally with corrupt dialect and imperfect expression, and hardly kept alive through centuries of neglect, they have reached

that last and worst state in which the *coup-de-grâce* has almost been dealt them by clumsy transcription and pedantic superstructure. At this stage the task of talking much more about them in any language is hardly to be entered upon; and a translation (involving as it does the necessity of settling many points without discussion,) remains perhaps the most direct form of commentary.

The life-blood of rhythmical translation is this commandment,—that a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one. The only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be to endow a fresh nation, as far as possible, with one more possession of beauty. Poetry not being an exact science, literalness of rendering is altogether secondary to this chief law. I say *literalness*,—not fidelity, which is by no means the same thing. When literalness can be combined with what is thus the primary condition of success, the translator is fortunate, and must strive his utmost to unite them; when such object can only be attained by paraphrase, that is his only path.

Any merit possessed by these translations is derived from an effort to follow this principle; and, in some degree, from the fact that such painstaking in arrangement and descriptive heading as is often indispensable to old and especially to “occasional” poetry, has here been bestowed on these poets for the first time.

That there are many defects in this collection, or that the above merit is its defect, or that it has no merits but only defects, are discoveries so sure to be made if necessary (or perhaps here and there in any case), that I may safely leave them in other hands. The series has probably a wider scope than some readers might look for, and includes now and then (though I believe in rare instances) matter which may not meet with universal approval; and whose introduction, needed as it is by the literary aim of my work, is I know inconsistent with the principles of pretty bookmaking. My wish has been to give a full and truthful view of early Italian poetry; not to make it appear to consist only of certain elements to the exclusion of others equally belonging to it.

Of the difficulties I have had to encounter,—the causes of imperfections for which I have no other excuse,—it is the reader's best privilege to remain ignorant; but I may perhaps be pardoned for briefly referring to such among these as concern the exigencies of translation. The task of the translator (and with all humility be it spoken) is one of some self-denial. Often would he avail himself of any special grace of his own idiom and epoch, if only his will belonged to him: often would some cadence serve him but for his author's structure—some structure but for his author's cadence: often the beautiful turn of a stanza must be weakened to adopt some rhyme which will tally, and he sees the poet revelling in abundance of language where himself is scantily supplied. Now he would slight the matter for the music, and now the music for the matter; but no,—he must deal to each alike. Sometimes too a flaw in the work galls him, and he would fain remove it, doing for the poet that which his age denied him; but no,—it is not in the bond. His path is like that of Aladdin through the enchanted vaults: many are the precious fruits and flowers which he must pass by unheeded in search for the lamp alone; happy if at last, when brought to light, it does not prove that his old lamp has been exchanged for a new one,—glittering indeed to the eye, but scarcely of the same virtue nor with the same genius at its summons.

In relinquishing this work (which, small as it is, is the only contribution I expect to make to our English knowledge of old Italy), I feel, as it were, divided from my youth. The first associations I have are connected with my father's devoted studies, which, from his own point of view, have done so much towards the general investigation of Dante's writings. Thus, in those early days, all around me partook

of the influence of the great Florentine; till, from viewing it as a natural element, I also, growing older, was drawn within the circle. I trust that from this the reader may place more confidence in a work not carelessly undertaken, though produced in the spare-time of other pursuits more closely followed. He should perhaps be told that it has occupied the leisure moments of not a few years; thus affording, often at long intervals, every opportunity for consideration and revision; and that on the score of care, at least, he has no need to mistrust it. Nevertheless, I know there is no great stir to be made by launching afresh, on high-seas busy with new traffic, the ships which have been long outstripped and the ensigns which are grown strange.

It may be well to conclude this short preface with a list of the works which have chiefly contributed to the materials of the present volume. An array of modern editions hardly looks so imposing as might a reference to Allacci, Crescimbeni, etc.; but these older collections would be found less accessible, and all they contain has been reprinted.

I. Poeti del primo secolo della Lingua Italiana. 2 vol. (Firenze. 1816.)

II. Raccolta di Rime antiche Toscane. 4 vol. (Palermo. 1817.)

III. Manuale della Letteratura del primo Secolo, del Prof. V. Nannucci. 3 vol. (Firenze. 1843.)

IV. Poesie Italiane inedite di Dugento Autori: raccolte da Francesco Trucchi. 4 vol. (Prato. 1846.)

V. Opere Minori di Dante. Edizione di P. I. Fraticelli. (Firenze. 1843, etc.)

VI. Rime di Guido Cavalcanti; raccolte da A. Cicciporci. (Firenze. 1813.)

VII. Vita e Poesie di Messer Cino da Pistoia. Edizione di S. Ciampi. (Pisa. 1813.)

VIII. Documenti d' Amore; di Francesco da Barberino. Annotati da F. Ubaldini. (Roma. 1640.)

IX. Del Reggimento e dei Costumi delle Donne; di Francesco da Barberino. (Roma. 1815.)

X. Il Dittamondo di Fazio Uberti. (Milano. 1826.)

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DANTE AND HIS CIRCLE

INTRODUCTION TO PART I

IN the first division of this volume are included all the poems I could find which seemed to have value as being personal to the circle of Dante's friends, and as illustrating their intercourse with each other. Those who know the Italian collections from which I have drawn these pieces (many of them most obscure) will perceive how much which is in fact elucidation is here attempted to be embodied in themselves, as to their rendering, arrangement, and heading: since the Italian editors have never yet paid any of them, except of course those by Dante, any such attention; but have printed and reprinted them in a jumbled and disheartening form, by which they can serve little purpose except as *testi di lingua*—dead stock by whose help the makers of dictionaries may smother the language with decayed words. Appealing now I believe for the first time in print, though in a new idiom, from their once living writers to such living readers as they may find, they require some preliminary notice.

The *Vita Nuova* (the Autobiography or Autopsychology of Dante's youth till about his twenty-seventh year) is already well known to many in the original, or by means of essays and of English versions partial or entire. It is, therefore, and on all accounts, unnecessary to say much more of the work here than it says for itself. Wedded to its exquisite and intimate beauties are personal peculiarities which excite wonder and conjecture, best replied to in the words which Beatrice herself is made to utter in the *Commedia*: "*Questi fù tal nella sua vita nuova.*"* Thus then young Dante *was*. All that seemed possible to be done here for the work was to translate it in as free and clear a form as was consistent with fidelity to its meaning; to ease it, as far as possible, from notes and encumbrances; and to accompany it for the first time with those poems from Dante's own lyrical series which have reference to its events, as well as with such native commentary (so to speak) as might be afforded by the writings of those with whom its author was at that time in familiar intercourse. Not chiefly to Dante, then, of whom so much is known to all or may readily be found written, but to the various other members of his circle, these few pages should be devoted.

It may be noted here, however, how necessary a knowledge of the *Vita Nuova* is to the full comprehension of the part borne by Beatrice in the *Commedia*. Moreover, it is only from the perusal of its earliest and then undivulged self-communings that we can divine the whole bitterness of wrong to such a soul as Dante's, its poignant sense of abandonment, or its deep and jealous refuge in memory. Above all, it is here that we find the first manifestations of that wisdom of

* Purgatorio, C. xxx.

obedience, that natural breath of duty, which afterwards, in the *Commedia*, lifted up a mighty voice for warning and testimony. Throughout the *Vita Nuova* there is a strain like the first falling murmur which reaches the ear in some remote meadow, and prepares us to look upon the sea.

Boccaccio, in his Life of Dante, tells us that the great poet, in later life, was ashamed of this work of his youth. Such a statement hardly seems reconcilable with the allusions to it made or implied in the *Commedia*; but it is true that the *Vita Nuova* is a book which only youth could have produced, and which must chiefly remain sacred to the young; to each of whom the figure of Beatrice, less lifelike than lovelike, will seem the friend of his own heart. Nor is this, perhaps, its least praise. To tax its author with effeminacy on account of the extreme sensitiveness evinced by this narrative of his love, would be manifestly unjust, when we find that, though love alone is the theme of the *Vita Nuova*, war already ranked among its author's experiences at the period to which it relates. In the year 1289, the one preceding the death of Beatrice, Dante served with the foremost cavalry in the great battle of Campaldino, on the eleventh of June, when the Florentines defeated the people of Arezzo. In the autumn of the next year, 1290, when for him, by the death of Beatrice, the city as he says "sat solitary," such refuge as he might find from his grief was sought in action and danger: for we learn from the *Commedia* (Hell, C. xxi.) that he served in the war then waged by Florence upon Pisa, and was present at the surrender of Caprona. He says, using the reminiscence to give life to a description, in his great way:—

"I've seen the troops out of Caprona go
On terms, affrighted thus, when on the spot
They found themselves with foemen compass'd so."
(CAYLEY'S Translation.)

A word should be said here of the title of Dante's autobiography. The adjective *Nuovo*, *nuova*, or *Novello*, *novella*, literally *New*, is often used by Dante and other early writers in the sense of *young*. This has induced some editors of the *Vita Nuova* to explain the title as meaning *Early Life*. I should be glad on some accounts to adopt this supposition, as everything is a gain which increases clearness to the modern reader; but on consideration I think the more mystical interpretation of the words, as *New Life* (in reference to that revulsion of his being which Dante so minutely describes as having occurred simultaneously with his first sight of Beatrice), appears the primary one, and therefore the most necessary to be given in a translation. The probability may be that both were meant, but this I cannot convey.*

* I must hazard here (to relieve the first page of my translation from a long note) a suggestion as to the meaning of the most puzzling passage in the whole *Vita Nuova*,—that sentence just at the outset which says, "La gloriosa donna della mia mente, la quale fù chiamata da molti Beatrice, i quali non sapeano che si chiamare." On this passage all the commentators seem helpless, turning it about and sometimes adopting alterations not to be found in any ancient manuscript of the work. The words mean literally, "The glorious lady of my mind who was called Beatrice by many who knew not how she was called." This presents the obvious difficulty that the lady's name really was Beatrice, and that Dante throughout uses that name himself. In the text of my version I have adopted, as a rendering, the one of the various compromises which seemed to give the most beauty to the meaning. But it occurs to me that a less irrational escape out of the difficulty than any I have seen suggested may possibly be found by linking this passage with the close of the sonnet at page 332 of the *Vita Nuova*, beginning, "I felt a spirit of Love begin to stir," in the last line of which sonnet Love is made to assert that the name of Beatrice is *Love*. Dante appears to have dwelt on this fancy with some pleasure, from what is said in an earlier sonnet (page 315) about "Love in his proper form" (by which Beatrice seems to be meant) bending over a dead lady. And it is in connection with the sonnet where the name of Beatrice is said to be Love, that Dante, as if to show us that the Love he speaks of is only his own emotion, enters into an argument as to Love being merely an accident in substance,—in other words, "Amore e il cor gentil son una cosa." This conjecture may be pronounced extravagant; but the *Vita Nuova*, when examined, proves so full of intricate and fantastic analogies, even in the mere arrangement of its parts (much more than appears on any but the closest

Among the poets of Dante's circle, the first in order, the first in power, and the one whom Dante has styled his "first friend," is GUIDO CAVALCANTI, born about 1250, and thus Dante's senior by some fifteen years. It is therefore probable that there is some inaccuracy about the statement, often repeated, that he was Dante's fellow-pupil under Brunetto Latini; though it seems certain that they both studied, probably Guido before Dante, with the same teacher. The Cavalcanti family was among the most ancient in Florence; and its importance may be judged by the fact that in 1280, on the occasion of one of the various missions sent from Rome with the view of pacifying the Florentine factions, the name of "Guido the son of Messer Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti" appears as one of the sureties offered by the city for the quarter of San Piero Scheraggio. His father must have been notoriously a sceptic in matters of religion, since we find him placed by Dante in the sixth circle of Hell, in one of the fiery tombs of the unbelievers. That Guido shared this heresy was the popular belief, as is plain from an anecdote in Boccaccio which I shall give; and some corroboration of such reports, at any rate as applied to Guido's youth, seems capable of being gathered from an extremely obscure poem, which I have translated on that account (at page 376) as clearly as I found possible. It must be admitted, however, that there is to the full as much devotional as sceptical tendency implied here and there in his writings; while the presence of either is very rare. We may also set against such a charge the fact that Dino Compagni refers, as will be seen, to his having undertaken a religious pilgrimage. But indeed he seems to have been in all things of that fitful and vehement nature which would impress others always strongly, but often in opposite ways. Self-reliant pride gave its colour to all his moods; making his exploits as a soldier frequently abortive through the head-strong ardour of partisanship, and causing the perversity of a logician to prevail in much of his amorous poetry. The writings of his contemporaries, as well as his own, tend to show him rash in war, fickle in love, and presumptuous in belief; but also, by the same concurrent testimony, he was distinguished by great personal beauty, high accomplishments of all kinds, and daring nobility of soul. Not unworthy, for all the weakness of his strength, to have been the object of Dante's early emulation, the first friend of his youth, and his precursor and fellow-labourer in the creation of Italian Poetry.

In the year 1267, when Guido cannot have been much more than seventeen years of age, a last attempt was made in Florence to reconcile the Guelfs and Ghibellines. With this view several alliances were formed between the leading families of the two factions; and among others, the Guef Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti wedded his son Guido to a daughter of the Ghibelline Farinata degli Uberti. The peace was of short duration; the utter expulsion of the Ghibellines (through French intervention solicited by the Guelfs) following almost immediately. In the subdivision, which afterwards took place, of the victorious Guelfs into so-called "Blacks" and "Whites," Guido embraced the White party, which tended strongly to Ghibellinism, and whose chief was Vieri de' Cerchi, while Corso Donati headed the opposite faction. Whether his wife was still living at the time when the events of the *Vita Nuova* occurred is probably not ascertainable; but about that time Dante tells us that Guido was enamoured of a lady named *Giovanna* or *Joan*, and whose Christian name is absolutely all that we know of her. However, on the occasion of his pilgrimage to Thoulouse, recorded

scrutiny), that it seems admissible to suggest even a whimsical solution of a difficulty which remains unconquered. Or to have recourse to the much more welcome means of solution afforded by simple inherent beauty: may not the meaning be merely that any person looking on so noble and lovely a creation, without knowledge of her name, must have spontaneously called her Beatrice,—i.e., the giver of blessing? This would be analogous by antithesis to the translation I have adopted in my text.

by Dino Compagni, he seems to have conceived a fresh passion for a lady of that city named Mandetta, who first attracted him by a striking resemblance to his Florentine mistress. Thoulouse had become a place of pilgrimage from its laying claim to the possession of the body, or part of the body, of St. James the Greater; though the same supposed distinction had already made the shrine of Compostella in Galicia one of the most famous throughout all Christendom. That this devout journey of Guido's had other results besides a new love will be seen by the passage from Compagni's *Chronicle*. He says:

"A young and noble knight named Guido, son of Messer Cavalcante Cavalcanti,—full of courage and courtesy, but disdainful, solitary, and devoted to study,—was a foe to Messer Corso (Donati), and had many times cast about to do him hurt. Messer Corso feared him exceedingly, as knowing him to be of a great spirit, and sought to assassinate him on a pilgrimage which Guido made to the shrine of St. James; but he might not compass it. Wherefore, having returned to Florence and being made aware of this, Guido incited many youths against Messer Corso, and these promised to stand by him. Who being one day on horseback with certain of the house of the Cerchi, and having a javelin in his hand, spurred his horse against Messer Corso, thinking to be followed by the Cerchi that so their companies might engage each other; and he running in on his horse cast the javelin, which missed its aim. And with Messer Corso were Simon, his son, a strong and daring youth, and Cecchino de' Bardi, who with many others pursued Guido with drawn swords; but not overtaking him they threw stones after him, and also others were thrown at him from the windows, whereby he was wounded in the hand. And by this matter hate was increased. And Messer Corso spoke great scorn of Messer Vieri, calling him the Ass of the Gate; because, albeit a very handsome man, he was but of blunt wit and no great speaker. And therefore Messer Corso would say often, 'To-day the Ass of the Gate has brayed,' and so greatly disparage him; and Guido he called *Cavicchia*.* And thus it was spread abroad of the *jongleurs*; and especially one named Scampolino reported worse things than were said, that so the Cerchi might be provoked to engage the Donati."

The praise which Compagni, his contemporary, awards to Guido at the commencement of the foregoing extract, receives additional value when viewed in connection with the sonnet addressed to him by the same writer (see page 368), where we find that he could tell him of his faults.

Such scenes as the one related above had become common things in Florence, which kept on its course from bad to worse till Pope Boniface VIII. resolved on sending a legate to propose certain amendments in its scheme of government by *Priori*, or representatives of the various arts and companies. These proposals, however, were so ill received that the legate, who arrived in Florence in the month of June 1300, departed shortly afterwards greatly incensed, leaving the city under a papal interdict. In the ill-considered tumults which ensued we again hear of Guido Cavalcanti.

"It happened" (says Giovanni Villani in his *History of Florence*) "that in the month of December (1300) Messer Corso Donati with his followers, and also those of the house of the Cerchi and their followers, going armed to the funeral of a lady of the Frescobaldi family, this party defying that by their looks would have assailed the one the other; whereby all those who were at the funeral having risen up tumultuously and fled each to his house, the whole city got under arms, both factions assembling in great numbers, at their respective houses. Messer Gentile de' Cerchi, Guido Cavalcanti, Balduccio and Corso Adimari, Baschiero della Tosa and Naldo Gherardini, with their comrades and adherents on horse and on foot, hastened to St. Peter's Gate to the house of the Donati. Not finding them there they went on to San Pier Maggiore, where Messer Corso was with his friends and followers; by whom they were encountered and put to flight, with many wounds and with much shame to the party of the Cerchi and to their adherents."

By this time we may conjecture as probable that Dante, in the arduous position which he then filled as chief of the nine *Priori* on whom

* A nickname chiefly chosen, no doubt, for its resemblance to *Cavalcanti*. The word *cavicchia*, *cavicchio*, or *caviglia*, means a wooden peg or pin. A passage in Boccaccio says, "He had tied his ass to a strong wooden pin" (*caviglia*). Thus Guido, from his mental superiority, might be said to be the Pin to which the Ass, Messer Vieri, was tethered at the Gate, (that is, the gate of San Pietro, near which he lived). However, it seems quite as likely that the nickname was founded on a popular phrase by which one who fails in any undertaking is said "to run his rear on a peg" (*dare del culo in un cavicchio*). The haughty Corso Donati himself went by the name of *Malejammi* or "Do-me-harm." For an account of his death in 1307, which proved in keeping with his turbulent life, see Dino Compagni's *Chronicle*, or the *Pecorone* of Giovanni Fiorentino (Gior. xxiv. Nov. 2).

the Government of Florence devolved, had resigned for far other cares the sweet intercourse of thought and poetry which he once held with that first friend of his who had now become so factious a citizen. Yet it is impossible to say how much of the old feeling may still have survived in Dante's mind when, at the close of the year 1300 or beginning of 1301, it became his duty, as a faithful magistrate of the republic, to add his voice to those of his colleagues in pronouncing a sentence of banishment on the heads of both the Black and White factions, Guido Cavalcanti being included among the latter. The Florentines had been at last provoked almost to demand this course from their governors, by the discovery of a conspiracy, at the head of which was Corso Donati (while among its leading members was Simone de' Bardi, once the husband of Beatrice Portinari), for the purpose of inducing the Pope to subject the republic to a French peace-maker (*Paciere*), and so shamefully free it from its intestine broils. It appears therefore that the immediate cause of the exile to which both sides were subjected lay entirely with the "Black" party, the leaders of which were banished to the Castello della Pieve in the wild district of Massa Traberia, while those of the "White" faction were sent to Sarzana, probably (for more than one place bears the name) in the Genovesato. "But this party" (writes Villani) "remained a less time in exile, being recalled on account of the unhealthiness of the place, which made that Guido Cavalcanti returned with a sickness, whereof he died. And of him was a great loss; seeing that he was a man, as in philosophy, so in many things deeply versed; but therewithal too fastidious and prone to take offence." * His death apparently took place in 1301.

When the discords of Florence ceased, for Guido, in death, Dante also had seen their native city for the last time. Before Guido's return he had undertaken that embassy to Rome which bore him the bitter fruit of unjust and perpetual exile: and it will be remembered that a chief accusation against him was that of favour shown to the White party on the banishment of the factions.

Besides the various affectionate allusions to Guido in the *Vita Nuova*, Dante has unmistakably referred to him in at least two passages of the *Commedia*. One of these references is to be found in those famous lines of the Purgatory (C. xi.) where he awards him the palm of poetry over Guido Guinicelli (though also of the latter he speaks elsewhere with high praise), and implies at the same time, it would seem, a consciousness of his own supremacy over both.

"Against all painters Cimabue thought
To keep the field. Now Giotto has the cry,
And so the fame o' the first wanes nigh to nought.
Thus one from other Guido took the high
Glory of language; and perhaps is born
He who from both shall bear it by-and-bye."

The other mention of Guido is in that pathetic passage of the Hell (C. x.) where Dante meets among the lost souls Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti:—

"All roundabout he looked, as though he had
Desire to see if one was with me else,
But after his surmise was all extinct,
He weeping said: 'If through this dungeon blind
Thou goest by loftiness of intellect,—
Where is my son, and wherefore not with thee?'
And I to him: 'Of myself come I not:
He who there waiteth leads me thoro' here,
Whom haply in disdain your Guido had.' †

* "*Tropo tenero e stizzoso.*" I judge that "*tenero*" here is rather to be interpreted as above than as meaning "impressionable" in love affairs, but cannot be certain.

† Virgil, Dante's guide through Hell. Any prejudice which Guido entertained against Virgil depended, no doubt, only on his strong desire to see the Latin language give place, in poetry and literature, to a perfected Italian idiom,

Raised upright of a sudden, cried he: 'How
 Didst say *He had*? Is he not living still?
 Doth not the sweet light strike upon his eyes?'
 When he perceived a certain hesitance
 Which I was making ere I should reply,
 He fell supine, and forth appeared no more."

Dante, however, conveys his answer afterwards to the spirit of Guido's father, through another of the condemned also related to Guido, Farinata degli Uberti, with whom he has been speaking meanwhile:—

"Then I, as in compunction for my fault,
 Said: 'Now then shall ye tell that fallen one
 His son is still united with the quick.
 And, if I erst was dumb to the response,
 I did it, make him know, because I thought
 Yet on the error you have solved for me.'"

(W. M. ROSSETTI'S Translation.)

The date which Dante fixes for his vision is Good Friday of the year 1300. A year later, his answer must have been different. The love and friendship of his *Vita Nuova* had then both left him. For ten years Beatrice Portinari had been dead, or (as Dante says in the *Convito*) "lived in heaven with the angels and on earth with his soul." And now, distant and probably estranged from him, Guido Cavalcanti was gone too.

Among the Tales of Franco Sacchetti, and in the Decameron of Boccaccio, are two anecdotes relating to Guido. Sacchetti tells us how, one day that he was intent on a game at chess, Guido (who is described as "one who perhaps had not his equal in Florence") was disturbed by a child playing about, and threatened punishment if the noise continued. The child, however, managed slyly to nail Guido's coat to the chair on which he sat, and so had the laugh against him when he rose soon afterwards to fulfil his threat. This may serve as an amusing instance of Guido's hasty temper, but is rather a disappointment after its magniloquent heading, which sets forth how "Guido Cavalcanti, being a man of great valour and a philosopher, is defeated by the cunning of a child."

The ninth Tale of the sixth Day of the Decameron relates a repartee of Guido's, which has all the profound platitude of mediæval wit. As the anecdote, however, is interesting on other grounds, I translate it here.

"You must know that in past times there were in our city certain goodly and praise-worthy customs no one of which is now left, thanks to avarice, which has so increased with riches that it has driven them all away. Among the which was one whereby the gentlemen of the outskirts were wont to assemble together in divers places throughout Florence, and to limit their fellowships to a certain number, having heed to compose them of such as could fitly discharge the expense. Of whom to-day one, and to-morrow another, and so all in turn, laid tables each on his own day for all the fellowship. And in such wise often they did honour to strangers of worship and also to citizens. They all dressed alike at least once in the year, and the most notable among them rode together through the city; also at seasons they held passages of arms, and specially on the principal feast-days, or whenever any news of victory or other glad tidings had reached the city. And among these fellowships was one headed by Messer Betto Brunelleschi, into the which Messer Betto and his companions had often intrigued to draw Guido di Messer Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti; and this not without cause, seeing that not only he was one of the best logicians that the world held, and a surpassing natural philosopher (for the which things the fellowship cared little), but also he exceeded in beauty and courtesy, and was of great gifts as a speaker; and everything that it pleased him to do, and that best became a gentleman, he did better than any other; and was exceeding rich and knew well to solicit with honourable words whomsoever he deemed worthy. But Messer Betto had never been able to succeed in enlisting him; and he and his companions believed that this was through Guido's much pondering which divided him from other men. Also because he held somewhat of the opinion of the Epicureans, it was said among the vulgar sort that his speculations were only to cast about whether he might find that there was no God. Now on a certain day Guido having left Or San Michele, and held along the Corso degli Adimari as far as San Giovanni (which oftentimes was his walk); and coming to the great marble tombs which now are in the Church of Santa Reparata, but were then with many others in San Giovanni; he being between the porphyry columns which are there among those tombs, and the gate of San Giovanni which was locked;—it so chanced that Messer Betto and his fellowship came riding up

by the Piazza di Santa Reparata, and seeing Guido among the sepulchres, said, 'Let us go and engage him.' Whereupon, spurring their horses in the fashion of a pleasant assault, they were on him almost before he was aware, and began to say to him, 'Thou, Guido, wilt none of our fellowship; but lo now! when thou shalt have found that there is no God, what wilt thou have done?' To whom Guido, seeing himself hemmed in among them, readily replied, 'Gentlemen, ye are at home here, and may say what ye please to me.' Wherewith, setting his hand on one of those high tombs, being very light of his person, he took a leap and was over on the other side; and so having freed himself from them, went his way. And they all remained bewildered, looking on one another; and began to say that he was but a shallow-witted fellow, and that the answer he had made was as though one should say nothing; seeing that where they were, they had not more to do than other citizens, and Guido not less than they. To whom Messer Betto turned and said thus: 'Ye yourselves are shallow-witted if ye have not understood him. He has civilly and in a few words said to us the most uncivil thing in the world; for if ye look well to it, these tombs are the homes of the dead, seeing that in them the dead are set to dwell; and here he says that we are at home; giving us to know that we and all other simple unlettered men, in comparison of him and the learned, are even as dead men; wherefore, being here, we are at home.' Thereupon each of them understood what Guido had meant, and was ashamed; nor ever again did they set themselves to engage him. Also from that day forth they held Messer Betto to be a subtle and understanding knight."

In the above story mention is made of Guido Cavalcanti's wealth, and there seems no doubt that at that time the family was very rich and powerful. On this account I am disposed to question whether the Canzone at page 374 (where the author speaks of his poverty) can really be Guido's work, though I have included it as being interesting if rightly attributed to him; and it is possible that, when exiled, he may have suffered for the time in purse as well as person. About three years after his death, on the 10th June, 1304, the Black party plotted together and set fire to the quarter of Florence chiefly held by their adversaries. In this conflagration the houses and possessions of the Cavalcanti were almost entirely destroyed; the flames in that neighbourhood (as Dino Compagni records) gaining rapidly in consequence of the great number of waxen images in the Virgin's shrine at Or San Michele; one of which, no doubt, was the very image resembling his lady to which Guido refers in a sonnet (see page 359). After this, their enemies succeeded in finally expelling from Florence the Cavalcanti family,* greatly impoverished by this monstrous fire, in which nearly two thousand houses were consumed.

Guido appears, by various evidence, to have written, besides his poems, a treatise on Philosophy and another on Oratory, but his poems only have survived to our day. As a poet, he has more individual life of his own than belongs to any of his predecessors; by far the best of his pieces being those which relate to himself, his loves and hates. The best known, however, and perhaps the one for whose sake the rest have been preserved, is the metaphysical canzone on the Nature of Love, beginning "Donna mi priega," and intended, it is said, as an answer to a sonnet by Guido Orlandi, written as though coming from a lady, and beginning, "Onde si muove e donde nasce Amore?" On this canzone of Guido's there are known to exist no fewer than eight commentaries, some of them very elaborate, and written by prominent learned men of the middle ages and *renaissance*; the earliest being that by Egidio Colonna, a beatified churchman who died in 1316; while most of the too numerous Academic writers on Italian literature speak of this performance with great admiration as Guido's crowning work. A love-song which acts as such a fly-catcher for priests and pedants looks very suspicious; and accordingly, on examination, it proves to be a poem beside the purpose of poetry, filled with metaphysical jargon, and perhaps the very worst of Guido's

* With them were expelled the still more powerful Gherardini, also great sufferers by the conflagration; who, on being driven from their own country, became the founders of the ancient Geraldine family in Ireland. The Cavalcanti reappear now and then in later European history; and especially we hear of a second Guido Cavalcanti, who also cultivated poetry, and travelled to collect books for the Ambrosian Library; and who, in 1563, visited England as Ambassador to the court of Elizabeth from Charles IX. of France.

productions. Its having been written by a man whose life and works include so much that is impulsive and real, is easily accounted for by scholastic pride in those early days of learning. I have not translated it, as being of little true interest; but was pleased lately, nevertheless, to meet with a remarkably complete translation of it by the Rev. Charles T. Brooks, of Cambridge, United States.* The stiffness and cold conceits which prevail in this poem may be found disfiguring much of what Guido Cavalcanti has left, while much besides is blunt, obscure, and abrupt: nevertheless, if it need hardly be said how far he falls short of Dante in variety and personal directness, it may be admitted that he worked worthily at his side, and perhaps before him, in adding those qualities to Italian poetry. That Guido's poems dwelt in the mind of Dante is evident by his having appropriated lines from them (as well as from those of Guinicelli) with little alteration, more than once, in the *Commedia*.

Towards the close of his life, Dante, in his Latin treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, again speaks of himself as the friend of a poet,—this time of CINO DA PISTOIA. In an early passage of that work he says that "those who have most sweetly and subtly written poems in modern Italian are Cino da Pistoia and a friend of his." This friend we afterwards find to be Dante himself; as among the various poetical examples quoted are several by Cino followed in three instances by lines from Dante's own lyrics, the author of the latter being again described merely as "Amicus ejus." In immediate proximity to these, or coupled in two instances with examples from Dante alone, are various quotations taken from Guido Cavalcanti; but in none of these cases is anything said to connect Dante with him who was once "the first of his friends."† As commonly between old and new, the change of Guido's friendship for Cino's seems doubtful gain. Cino's poetry, like his career, is for the most part smoother than that of Guido, and in some instances it rises into truth and warmth of expression: but it conveys no idea of such powers, for life or for work, as seem to have distinguished the "Cavicchia" of Messer Corso Donati. However, his one talent (reversing the parable) appears generally to be made the most of, while Guido's two or three remain uncertain through the manner of their use.

Cino's Canzone addressed to Dante on the death of Beatrice, as well as his answer to the first sonnet of the *Vita Nuova*, indicate that the two poets must have become acquainted in youth, though there is no earlier mention of Cino in Dante's writings than those which occur in his treatise on the Vulgar Tongue. It might perhaps be inferred with some plausibility that their acquaintance was revived after an interruption by the sonnet and answer at page 354, and that they afterwards corresponded as friends till the period of Dante's death,

* This translation occurs in the Appendix to an Essay on the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, including extracts, by my friend Mr. Charles E. Norton, of Cambridge, U.S.,—a work of high delicacy and appreciation, which originally appeared by portions in the *Atlantic Monthly*, but has since been augmented by the author and privately printed in a volume which is a beautiful specimen of American typography.

† It is also noticeable that in this treatise Dante speaks of Guido Guinicelli on one occasion as *Guido Maximus*, thus seeming to contradict the preference of Cavalcanti which is usually supposed to be implied in the passage I have quoted from the *Purgatory*. It has been sometimes surmised (perhaps for this reason) that the two Guidos there spoken of may be Guittone d'Arezzo and Guido Guinicelli, the latter being said to surpass the former, of whom Dante elsewhere in the *Purgatory* has expressed a low opinion. But I should think it doubtful whether the name Guittone, which (if not a nickname, as some say) is substantially the same as Guido, could be so absolutely identified with it: at that rate Cino da Pistoia even might be classed as one Guido, his full name, Guittoncino, being the diminutive of Guittone. I believe it more probable that Guinicelli and Cavalcanti were then really meant, and that Dante afterwards either altered his opinion, or may (conjecturably) have chosen to imply a change of preference in order to gratify Cino da Pistoia, whom he so markedly distinguishes as his friend throughout the treatise, and between whom and Cavalcanti some jealousy appears to have existed, as we may gather from one of Cino's sonnets (at page 386); nor is Guido mentioned anywhere with praise by Cino, as other poets are.

when Cino wrote his elegy. Of the two sonnets in which Cino expresses disapprobation of what he thinks the partial judgments of Dante's *Commedia*, the first seems written before the great poet's death, but I should think that the second dated after that event, as the *Paradise*, to which it refers, cannot have become fully known in its author's lifetime. Another sonnet sent to Dante elicited a Latin epistle in reply, where we find Cino addressed as "frater carissime." Among Cino's lyrical poems are a few more written in correspondence with Dante, which I have not translated as being of little personal interest.

Guittoncino de' Sinibuldi (for such was Cino's full name) was born in Pistoia, of a distinguished family, in the year 1270. He devoted himself early to the study of law, and in 1307 was Assessor of Civil Causes in his native city. In this year, and in Pistoia, first cradle of the "Black" and "White" factions, their endless contest again sprang into activity; the "Blacks" and Guelphs of Florence and Lucca driving out the "Whites" and Ghibellines, who had ruled in the city since 1300. With their accession to power came many iniquitous laws in favour of their own party; so that Cino, as a lawyer of Ghibelline opinions, soon found it necessary or advisable to leave Pistoia, for it seems uncertain whether his removal was voluntary or by proscription. He directed his course towards Lombardy, on whose confines the chief of the "White" party, in Pistoia, Filippo Vergiolesi, still held the fortress of Pitecchio. Hither Vergiolesi had retreated with his family and adherents when resistance in the city became no longer possible; and it may be supposed that Cino came to join him, not on account of political sympathy alone; as Selvaggia Vergiolesi, his daughter, is the lady celebrated throughout the poet's compositions. Three years later, the Vergiolesi and their followers, finding Pitecchio untenable, fortified themselves on the Monte della Sambuca, a lofty peak on the Apennines; which again they were finally obliged to abandon, yielding it to the Guelphs of Pistoia at the price of eleven thousand *lire*. Meanwhile the bleak air of the Sambuca had proved fatal to the lady Selvaggia, who remained buried there, or, as Cino expresses it in one of his poems,

"Cast out upon the steep path of the mountains,
Where Death has shut her in between hard stones."

Over her cheerless tomb Cino bent and mourned, as he has told us, when, after a prolonged absence spent partly in France, he returned through Tuscany on his way to Rome. He had not been with Selvaggia's family at the time of her death; and it is probable that, on his return to the Sambuca, the fortress was already surrendered, and her grave almost the only record left there of the Vergiolesi.

Cino's journey to Rome was on account of his having received a high office under Louis of Savoy, who preceded the Emperor Henry VII. when he went thither to be crowned in 1310. In another three years the last blow was dealt to the hopes of the exiled and persecuted Ghibellines, by the death of the Emperor, caused almost surely by poison. This death Cino has lamented in a canzone. It probably determined him to abandon a cause which seemed dead, and return, when possible, to his native city. This he succeeded in doing before 1319, as in that year we find him deputed, together with six other citizens, by the Government of Pistoia to take possession of a stronghold recently yielded to them. He had now been for some time married to Margherita degli Ughi, of a very noble Pistoiese family, who bore him a son named Mino, and four daughters, Diamante, Beatrice, Giovanna, and Lombarduccia. Indeed, this marriage must have taken place before the death of Selvaggia in 1310, as in 1325-26 his son Mino was one of those by whose aid from within the Ghibelline Castruccio Antelminelli obtained possession of Pistoia, which he held in spite of revolts

till his death some two or three years afterwards, when it again reverted to the Guelfs.

After returning to Pistoia, Cino's whole life was devoted to the attainment of legal and literary fame. In these pursuits he reaped the highest honours, and taught at the universities of Siena, Perugia, and Florence; having for his disciples men who afterwards became celebrated, among whom rumour has placed Petrarch, though on examination this seems very doubtful. A sonnet by Petrarch exists, however, commencing "*Piangete donne e con voi pianga Amore,*" written as a lament on Cino's death, and bestowing the highest praise on him. He and his Selvaggia are also coupled with Dante and Beatrice in the same poet's *Trionfi d' Amore* (cap. 4).

Though established again in Pistoia, Cino resided there but little till about the time of his death, which occurred in 1336-7. His monument, where he is represented as a professor among his disciples, still exists in the Cathedral of Pistoia, and is a mediæval work of great interest. Messer Cino de' Sinibuldi was a prosperous man, of whom we have ample records, from the details of his examinations as a student, to the inventory of his effects after death, and the curious items of his funeral expenses. Of his claims as a poet it may be said that he filled creditably the interval which elapsed between the death of Dante and the full blaze of Petrarch's success. Most of his poems in honour of Selvaggia are full of an elaborate and mechanical tone of complaint which hardly reads like the expression of a real love; nevertheless there are some, and especially the sonnet on her tomb (at page 384), which display feeling and power. The finest, as well as the most interesting, of all his pieces, is the very beautiful canzone in which he attempts to console Dante for the death of Beatrice. Though I have found much fewer among Cino's poems than among Guido's which seem to call for translation, the collection of the former is a larger one. Cino produced legal writings also, of which the chief one that has survived is a Commentary on the Statutes of Pistoia, said to have great merit, and whose production in the short space of two years was accounted an extraordinary achievement.

Having now spoken of the chief poets of this division, it remains to notice the others of whom less is known.

DANTE DA MAIANO (Dante being, as with Alighieri, the short of Durante, and Maiano in the neighbourhood of Fiesole) had attained some reputation as a poet before the career of his great namesake began; his Sicilian lady Nina (herself, it is said, a poetess, and not personally known to him) going by the then unequivocal title of "*La Nina di Dante.*" This priority may also be inferred from the contemptuous answer sent by him to Dante Alighieri's dream sonnet in the *Vita Nuova* (see page 388). All the writers on early Italian poetry seem to agree in specially censuring this poet's rhymes as coarse and trivial in manner; nevertheless, they are sometimes distinguished by a careless force not to be despised, and even by snatches of real beauty. Of Dante da Maiano's life no record whatever has come down to us.

Most literary circles have their prodigal, or what in modern phrase might be called their "scamp"; and among our Danteans, this place is indisputably filled by CECCO ANGIOLIERI, of Siena. Nearly all his sonnets (and no other pieces by him have been preserved) relate either to an unnatural hatred of his father, or to an infatuated love for the daughter of a shoemaker, a certain married Becchina. It would appear that Cecco was probably enamoured of her before her marriage as well as afterwards, and we may surmise that his rancour against his father may have been partly dependent, in the first instance, on the disagreements arising from such a connection. However, from an amusing and lifelike story in the Decameron (Gior. ix. Nov. 4) we learn that on one occasion Cecco's father paid him six months' allowance in advance, in order that he might proceed to the Marca d'Ancona, and

join the suite of a Papal Legate who was his patron ; which looks, after all, as if the father had some care of his graceless son. The story goes on to relate how Cecco (whom Boccaccio describes as a handsome and well-bred man) was induced to take with him as his servant a fellow-gamester with whom he had formed an intimacy purely on account of the hatred which each of the two bore his own father, though in other respects they had little in common. The result was that this fellow, during the journey, while Cecco was asleep at Buonconvento, took all his money and lost it at the gaming table, and afterwards managed by an adroit trick to get possession of his horse and clothes, leaving him nothing but his shirt. Cecco then, ashamed to return to Siena, made his way, in a borrowed suit and mounted on his servant's sorry hack, to Corsignano, where he had relations ; and there he stayed till his father once more (surely much to his credit) made him a remittance of money. Boccaccio seems to say in conclusion that Cecco ultimately had his revenge on the thief.

In reading many both of Cecco's love-sonnets and hate-sonnets, it is impossible not to feel some pity for the indications they contain of self-sought poverty, unhappiness, and natural bent to ruin. Altogether they have too much curious individuality to allow of their being omitted here : especially as they afford the earliest prominent example of a naturalism without afterthought in the whole of Italian poetry. Their humour is sometimes strong, if not well chosen ; their passion always forcible from its evident reality : nor indeed are several among them devoid of a certain delicacy. This quality is also to be discerned in other pieces which I have not included as having less personal interest ; but it must be confessed that for the most part the sentiments expressed in Cecco's poetry are either impious or licentious. Most of the sonnets of his which are in print are here given ; * the selections concluding with an extraordinary one in which he proposes a sort of murderous crusade against all those who hate their fathers. This I have placed last (exclusive of the Sonnet to Dante in exile) in order to give the writer the benefit of the possibility that it was written last, and really expressed a still rather blood-thirsty contrition ; belonging at best, I fear, to the content of self-indulgence when he came to enjoy his father's inheritance. But most likely it is to be received as an expression of impudence alone, unless perhaps of hypocrisy.

Cecco Angiolieri seems to have had poetical intercourse with Dante early as well as later in life ; but even from the little that remains, we may gather that Dante soon put an end to any intimacy which may have existed between them. That Cecco already poetized at the time to which the *Vita Nuova* relates is evident from a date given in one of his sonnets,—the 20th June 1291, and from his sonnet raising objections to the one at the close of Dante's autobiography. When the latter was written he was probably on good terms with the young Alighieri ; but within no great while afterwards they had discovered that they could not agree, as is shown by a sonnet in which Cecco can find no words bad enough for Dante, who has remonstrated with him about Becchina.† Much later, as we may judge, he again addresses Dante in an insulting tone, apparently while the latter was living in exile at the court of Can Grande della Scala. No other reason can well be assigned for saying that he had "turned Lombard" ; while some of the insolent allusions seem also to point to the time when Dante

* It may be mentioned (as proving how much of the poetry of this period still remains in MS.) that Ubaldini, in his Glossary to Barberino, published in 1640, cites as grammatical examples no fewer than twenty-three short fragments from Cecco Angiolieri, one of which alone is to be found among the sonnets which I have seen, and which I believe are the only ones in print. Ubaldini quotes them from the Strozzi MSS.

† Of this sonnet I have seen two printed versions, in both of which the text is so corrupt as to make them very contradictory in important points ; but I believe that by comparing the two I have given its meaning correctly. (See page 395.)

learnt by experience "how bitter is another's bread and how steep the stairs of his house."

Why Cecco in this sonnet should describe himself as having become a Roman, is more puzzling. Boccaccio certainly speaks of his luckless journey to join a Papal legate, but does not tell us whether fresh clothes and the wisdom of experience served him in the end to become so far identified with the Church of Rome. However, from the sonnet on his father's death he appears (though the allusion is desperately obscure) to have been then living at an abbey; and also, from the one mentioned above, we may infer that he himself, as well as Dante, was forced to sit at the tables of others: coincidences which almost seem to afford a glimpse of the phenomenal fact that the bosom of the Church was indeed for a time the refuge of this shorn lamb. If so, we may further conjecture that the wonderful crusade-sonnet was an *amende honorable* then imposed on him, accompanied probably with more fleshly penance.

Though nothing indicates the time of Cecco Angiolieri's death, I will venture to surmise that he outlived the writing and revision of Dante's *Inferno*, if only by the token that he is not found lodged in one of its meaner circles. It is easy to feel sure that no sympathy can ever have existed for long between Dante and a man like Cecco; however arrogantly the latter, in his verses, might attempt to establish a likeness and even an equality. We may accept the testimony of so reverent a biographer as Boccaccio, that the Dante of later years was far other than the silent and awe-struck lover of the *Vita Nuova*; but he was still (as he proudly called himself) "the singer of Rectitude," and his that "indignant soul" which made blessed the mother who had borne him.*

Leaving to his fate (whatever that may have been) the Scamp of Dante's Circle, I must risk the charge of a confirmed taste for slang by describing GUIDO ORLANDI as its Bore. No other word could present him so fully. Very few pieces of his exist besides the five I have given. In one of these,† he rails against his political adversaries; in three,‡ falls foul of his brother poets; and in the remaining one,§ seems somewhat appeased (I think) by a judicious morsel of flattery. I have already referred to a sonnet of his which is said to have led to the composition of Guido Cavalcanti's Canzone on the Nature of Love. He has another sonnet beginning, "Per troppa sottiglianza il fil si rompe," || in which he is certainly enjoying a fling at somebody, and I suspect at Cavalcanti in rejoinder to the very poem which he himself had instigated. If so, this stamps him a master-critic of the deepest initiation. Of his life nothing is recorded; but no wish perhaps need be felt to know much of him, as one would probably have dropped his acquaintance. We may be obliged to him, however, for his character of Guido Cavalcanti (at page 366), which is boldly and vividly drawn.

Next follow three poets of whom I have given one specimen apiece. By BERNARDO DA BOLOGNA (page 367) no other is known to exist, nor can anything be learnt of his career. GIANNI ALFANI was a noble and distinguished Florentine, a much graver man, it would seem, than one could judge from this sonnet of his (page 367), which belongs rather to the school of Sir Pandarus of Troy.

DINO COMPAGNI, the chronicler of Florence, is represented here by

* "Alma sdegnosa,
Benedetta colei che in te s' incinse!"
(*Inferno*, C. viii.)

† Page 401.

‡ Pages 359, 366, 389.

§ Page 369.

|| This sonnet, as printed, has a gap in the middle; let us hope (in so immaculate a censor) from unfitness for publication.

a sonnet addressed to Guido Cavalcanti,* which is all the more interesting, as the same writer's historical work furnishes so much of the little known about Guido. Dino, though one of the noblest citizens of Florence, was devoted to the popular cause, and held successively various high offices in the state. The date of his birth is not fixed, but he must have been at least thirty in 1289, as he was one of the *Priori* in that year, a post which could not be held by a younger man. He died at Florence in 1323. Dino has rather lately assumed for the modern reader a much more important position than he occupied before among the early Italian poets. I allude to the valuable discovery, in the Magliabecchian Library at Florence, of a poem by him in *nona rima*, containing 309 stanzas. It is entitled "L'Intelligenza," and is of an allegorical nature interspersed with historical and legendary abstracts.†

I have placed LAPO GIANNI in this my first division on account of the sonnet by Dante (page 361), in which he seems undoubtedly to be the Lapo referred to. It has been supposed by some that Lapo degli Uberti (father of Fazio, and brother-in-law of Guido Cavalcanti) is meant; but this is hardly possible. Dante and Guido seem to have been in familiar intercourse with the Lapo of the sonnet at the time when it and others were written; whereas no Uberti can have been in Florence after the year 1267, when the Ghibellines were expelled; the Uberti family (as I have mentioned elsewhere) being the one of all others which was most jealously kept afar and excluded from every amnesty. The only information which I can find respecting Lapo Gianni is the statement that he was a notary by profession. I have also seen it somewhere asserted (though where I cannot recollect, and am sure no authority was given), that he was a cousin of Dante. We may equally infer him to have been the Lapo mentioned by Dante in his treatise on the Vulgar Tongue, as being one of the few who up to that time had written verses in pure Italian.

DINO FRESCOBALDI'S claim to the place given him here will not be disputed when it is remembered that by his pious care the seven first cantos of Dante's *Hell* were restored to him in exile, after the Casa Alighieri in Florence had been given up to pillage; by which restoration Dante was enabled to resume his work. This sounds strange when we reflect that a world without Dante would be a poorer planet. Meanwhile, beyond this great fact of Dino's life, which perhaps hardly occupied a day of it, there is no news to be gleaned of him.

GIOTTO falls by right into Dante's circle, as one great man comes naturally to know another. But he is said actually to have lived in great intimacy with Dante, who was about twelve years older than himself; Giotto having been born in or near the year 1276, at Vespignano, fourteen miles from Florence. He died in 1336, fifteen years after Dante. On the authority of Benvenuto da Imola (an early commentator on the *Commedia*), of Vasari, and others, it is said that Dante visited Giotto while he was painting at Padua; that the great poet furnished the great painter with the conceptions of a series of subjects from the Apocalypse, which he painted at Naples; and that Giotto, finally, passed some time with Dante in the exile's last refuge at Ravenna. There is a tradition that Dante also studied drawing with Giotto's master Cimabue; and that he practised it in some degree is evident from the passage in the *Vita Nuova*, where he speaks of his drawing an angel. The reader will not need to be reminded of Giotto's portrait of the youthful Dante, painted in the Bargello at Florence, then the chapel of the Podestà. This is the author

* Crescimbeni (*Ist. d. Volg. Poes.*) gives this sonnet from a MS., where it is headed "To Guido Guinicelli"; but he surmises, and I have no doubt correctly, that Cavalcanti is really the person addressed in it.

† See *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire littéraire de l'Italie, &c., par A. F. Ozanam* (Paris, 1850), where the poem is printed entire.

of the *Vita Nuova*. That other portrait shown us in the posthumous mask,—a face dead in exile after the death of hope,—should front the first page of the Sacred Poem to which heaven and earth had set their hands, but which might never bring him back to Florence, though it had made him haggard for many years.*

Giotto's Canzone on the doctrine of voluntary poverty,—the only poem we have of his,—is a protest against a perversion of gospel teaching which had gained ground in his day to the extent of becoming a popular frenzy. People went literally mad upon it; and to the reaction against this madness may also be assigned (at any rate partly) Cavalcanti's poem on Poverty, which, as we have seen, is otherwise not easily explained, if authentic. Giotto's canzone is all the more curious when we remember his noble fresco at Assisi, of Saint Francis wedded to Poverty.† It would really almost seem as if the poem had been written as a sort of safety-valve for the painter's true feelings, during the composition of the picture. At any rate, it affords another proof of the strong common sense and turn for humour which all accounts attribute to Giotto.

I have next introduced, as not inappropriate to the series of poems connected with Dante, SIMONE DALL' ANTELLA's fine sonnet relating to the last enterprises of Henry of Luxembourg, and to his then approaching end,—that deathblow to the Ghibelline hopes which Dante so deeply shared. This one sonnet is all we know of its author, besides his name.

GIOVANNI QUIRINO is another name which stands forlorn of any personal history. Fraticelli (in his well-known and valuable edition of Dante's Minor Works) says that there lived about 1250 a bishop of that name, belonging to a Venetian family. It is true that the tone of the sonnet which I give (and which is the only one attributed to this author) seems foreign at least to the confessions of bishops. It might seem credibly thus ascribed, however, from the fact that Dante's sonnet probably dates from Ravenna, and that his correspondent writes from some distance; while the poet might well have formed a friendship with a Venetian bishop at the court of Verona.

For me Quirino's sonnet has great value; as Dante's answer ‡ to it enables me to wind up this series with the name of its great chief; and, indeed, with what would almost seem to have been his last utterance in poetry, at that supreme juncture when he

"Slaked in his heart the fervour of desire,"

as at last he neared the very home

"Of Love which sways the sun and all the stars." §

I am sorry to see that this necessary introduction to my first division is longer than I could have wished. Among the severely-edited books which had to be consulted in forming this collection, I have often suffered keenly from the buttonholders of learned Italy, who will not let one go on one's way; and have contracted a horror of those editions where the text, hampered with numerals for reference, struggles through a few lines at the top of the page only to stick fast at the

* "Se mai continga che il poema sacro
Al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra,
Sì che m' ha fatto per più anni macro,
Vinca la crudeltà che fuor mi serra," etc.
(*Parad.* C. xxv.)

† See Dante's reverential treatment of this subject. (*Parad.* C. xi.)

‡ In the case of the above two sonnets, and of all others interchanged between two poets, I have thought it best to place them together among the poems of one or the other correspondent, wherever they seemed to have most biographical value; and the same with several epistolary sonnets which have no answer.

§ The last line of the *Paradise* (CAYLEY'S Translation).

bottom in a slough of verbal analysis. It would seem unpardonable to make a book which should be even as these ; and I have thus found myself led on to what I fear forms, by its length, an awkward *intermezzo* to the volume, in the hope of saying at once the most of what was to say ; that so the reader may not find himself perpetually worried with footnotes during the consideration of something which may require a little peace. The glare of too many tapers is apt to render the altar-picture confused and inharmonious, even when their smoke does not obscure or deface it.

DANTE ALIGHIERI

THE NEW LIFE

(LA VITA NUOVA)

In that part of the book of my memory before the which is little that can be read, there is a rubric, saying, *Incipit Vita Nova*.^{*} Under such rubric I find written many things; and among them the words which I purpose to copy into this little book; if not all of them, at the least their substance.

Nine times already since my birth had the heaven of light returned to the selfsame point almost, as concerns its own revolution, when first the glorious Lady of my mind was made manifest to mine eyes; even she who was called Beatrice by many who knew not wherefore.[†] She had already been in this life for so long as that, within her time, the starry heaven had moved towards the Eastern quarter one of the twelve parts of a degree; so that she appeared to me at the beginning of her ninth year almost, and I saw her almost at the end of my ninth year. Her dress, on that day, was of a most noble colour, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her very tender age. At that moment, I say most truly that the spirit of life, which hath its dwelling in the secretest chamber of the heart, began to tremble so violently that the least pulses of my body shook therewith; and in trembling it said these words: *Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi*.[‡] At that moment the animate spirit, which dwelleth in the lofty chamber whither all the senses carry their perceptions, was filled with wonder, and speaking more especially unto the spirits of the eyes, said these words: *Apparuit jam beatitudo vestra*.[§] At that moment the natural spirit, which dwelleth there where our nourishment is administered, began to weep, and in weeping said these words: *Heu miser! quia frequenter impeditus ero deinceps*.||

I say that, from that time forward, Love quite governed my soul; which was immediately espoused to him, and with so safe and undisputed a lordship (by virtue of strong imagination) that I had nothing left for it but to do all his bidding continually. He oftentimes commanded me to seek if I might see this youngest of the Angels: wherefore I in my boyhood often went in search of her, and found her so noble and praiseworthy that certainly of her might have been said

* "Here beginneth the new life."

† In reference to the meaning of the name, "She who confers blessing." We learn from Boccaccio that this first meeting took place at a May Feast, given in the year 1274 by Folco Portinari, father of Beatrice, who ranked among the principal citizens of Florence: to which feast Dante accompanied his father, Alighiero Alighieri.

‡ "Here is a deity stronger than I; who, coming, shall rule over me."

§ "Your beatitude hath now been made manifest unto you."

|| "Woe is me! for that often I shall be disturbed from this time forth!"

those words of the poet Homer, "She seemed not to be the daughter of a mortal man, but of God." * And albeit her image, that was with me always, was an exultation of Love to subdue me, it was yet of so perfect a quality that it never allowed me to be overruled by Love without the faithful counsel of reason, whensoever such counsel was useful to be heard. But seeing that were I to dwell overmuch on the passions and doings of such early youth, my words might be counted something fabulous, I will therefore put them aside; and passing many things that may be conceived by the pattern of these, I will come to such as are writ in my memory with a better distinctness.

After the lapse of so many days that nine years exactly were completed since the above-written appearance of this most gracious being, on the last of those days it happened that the same wonderful lady appeared to me dressed all in pure white, between two gentle ladies elder than she. And passing through a street, she turned her eyes thither where I stood sorely abashed: and by her unspeakable courtesy, which is now guerdoned in the Great Cycle, she saluted me with so virtuous a bearing that I seemed then and there to behold the very limits of blessedness. The hour of her most sweet salutation was exactly the ninth of that day; and because it was the first time that any words from her reached mine ears, I came into such sweetness that I parted thence as one intoxicated. And betaking me to the loneliness of mine own room, I fell to thinking of this most courteous lady; thinking of whom I was overtaken by a pleasant slumber, wherein a marvellous vision was presented for me; for there appeared to be in my room a mist of the colour of fire, within the which I discerned the figure of a lord of terrible aspect to such as should gaze upon him, but who seemed therewithal to rejoice inwardly that it was a marvel to see. Speaking he said many things, among the which I could understand but few; and of these, this: *Ego dominus tuus.*† In his arms it seemed to me that a person was sleeping, covered only with a blood-coloured cloth; upon whom looking very attentively, I knew that it was the lady of the salutation who had deigned the day before to salute me. And he who held her held also in his hand a thing that was burning in flames; and he said to me, *Vide cor tuum.*‡ But when he had remained with me a little while, I thought that he set himself to awaken her that slept; after the which he made her to eat that thing which flamed in his hand; and she ate as one fearing. Then, having waited again a space, all his joy was turned into most bitter weeping; and as he wept he gathered the lady into his arms, and it seemed to me that he went with her up towards heaven: whereby such a great anguish came upon me that my light slumber could not endure through it, but was suddenly broken. And immediately having considered, I knew that the hour wherein this vision had been made manifest to me was the fourth hour (which is to say, the first of the nine last hours) of the night.

Then, musing on what I had seen, I proposed to relate the same to many poets who were famous in that day: and for that I had myself in some sort the art of discoursing with rhyme, I resolved on making a sonnet, in the which, having saluted all such as are subject unto Love, and entreated them to expound my vision, I should write unto them those things which I had seen in my sleep. And the sonnet I made was this:—

To every heart which the sweet pain doth move,
And unto which these words may now be brought

* Οὐδὲ εἴποι
Ἄνδρός γε θνητοῦ παῖς ἔμμεναι, ἀλλὰ θεοῖο.
(*Iliad*, xxiv. 258.)

† "I am thy master."
‡ "Behold thy heart."

For true interpretation and kind thought,
 Be greeting in our Lord's name, which is Love.
 Of those long hours wherein the stars above
 Wake and keep watch, the third was almost nought,
 When Love was shown me with such terrors fraught
 As may not carelessly be spoken of.
 He seemed like one who is full of joy, and had
 My heart within his hand, and on his arm.
 My lady, with a mantle round her, slept;
 Whom (having wakened her) anon he made
 To eat that heart; she ate, as fearing harm.
 Then he went out; and as he went, he wept.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first part I give greeting, and ask an answer; in the second, I signify what thing has to be answered to. The second part commences here: "Of those long hours."

To this sonnet I received many answers, conveying many different opinions; of the which one was sent by him whom I now call the first among my friends, and it began thus, "Unto my thinking thou beheld'st all worth." * And indeed, it was when he learned that I was he who had sent those rhymes to him, that our friendship commenced. But the true meaning of that vision was not then perceived by any one, though it be now evident to the least skilful.

From that night forth, the natural functions of my body began to be vexed and impeded, for I was given up wholly to thinking of this most gracious creature: whereby in short space I became so weak and so reduced that it was irksome to many of my friends to look upon me; while others, being moved by spite, went about to discover what it was my wish should be concealed. Wherefore I (perceiving the drift of their unkindly questions), by Love's will, who directed me according to the counsels of reason, told them how it was Love himself who had thus dealt with me: and I said so, because the thing was so plainly to be discerned in my countenance that there was no longer any means of concealing it. But when they went on to ask, "And by whose help hath Love done this?" I looked in their faces smiling, and spake no word in return.

Now it fell on a day, that this most gracious creature was sitting where words were to be heard of the Queen of Glory; † and I was in a place whence mine eyes could behold their beatitude: and betwixt her and me, in a direct line, there sat another lady of a pleasant favour; who looked round at me many times, marvelling at my continued gaze which seemed to have *her* for its object. And many perceived that she thus looked; so that departing thence, I heard it whispered after me, "Look you to what a pass *such a lady* hath brought him"; and in saying this they named her who had been midway between the most gentle Beatrice and mine eyes. Therefore I was reassured, and knew that for that day my secret had not become manifest. Then immediately it came into my mind that I might make use of this lady as a screen to the truth: and so well did I play my part that the most of those who had hitherto watched and wondered at me, now imagined they had found me out. By her means I kept my secret concealed till some years were gone over; and for my better security, I even made divers rhymes in her honour; whereof I shall here write only as much as concerneth the most gentle Beatrice, which is but a very little. Moreover, about the same time while this lady was a screen for so much love on my part, I took the resolution to set down the name of this most gracious creature accompanied with many other women's names, and especially with hers whom I spake of. And to

* The friend of whom Dante here speaks was Guido Cavalcanti. For his answer, and those of Cino da Pistoia and Dante da Maiano, see their poems further on.

† *I.e.* in a church.

this end I put together the names of sixty the most beautiful ladies in that city where God had placed mine own lady ; and these names I introduced in an epistle in the form of a *servent*, which it is not my intention to transcribe here. Neither should I have said anything of this matter, did I not wish to take note of a certain strange thing, to wit : that having written the list, I found my lady's name would not stand otherwise than ninth in order among the names of these ladies.

Now it so chanced with her by whose means I had thus long time concealed my desire, that it behoved her to leave the city I speak of, and to journey afar : wherefore I, being sorely perplexed at the loss of so excellent a defence, had more trouble than even I could before have supposed. And thinking that if I spoke not somewhat mournfully of her departure, my former counterfeiting would be the more quickly perceived, I determined that I would make a grievous sonnet * thereof ; the which I will write here, because it hath certain words in it whereof my lady was the immediate cause, as will be plain to him that understands. And the sonnet was this :—

ALL ye that pass along Love's trodden way,
 Pause ye awhile and say
 If there be any grief like unto mine :
 I pray you that you hearken a short space
 Patiently, if my case
 Be not a piteous marvel and a sign.

Love (never, certes, for my worthless part,
 But of his own great heart),
 Vouchsafed to me a life so calm and sweet
 That oft I heard folk question as I went
 What such great gladness meant :—
 They spoke of it behind me in the street.

But now that fearless bearing is all gone
 Which with Love's hoarded wealth was given me ;
 Till I am grown to be
 So poor that I have dread to think thereon.

And thus it is that I, being like as one
 Who is ashamed and hides his poverty,
 Without seem full of glee,
 And let my heart within travail and moan.

This poem has two principal parts ; for, in the first, I mean to call the Faithful of Love in those words of Jeremias the Prophet, " O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus," and to pray them to stay and hear me. In the second I tell where Love had placed me, with a meaning other than that which the last part of the poem shows, and I say what I have lost. The second part begins here, " Love, (never, certes.)"

A certain while after the departure of that lady, it pleased the Master of the Angels to call into His glory a damsel, young and of a gentle presence, who had been very lovely in the city I speak of : and I saw her body lying without its soul among many ladies, who held a pitiful weeping. Whereupon, remembering that I had seen her in the company of excellent Beatrice, I could not hinder myself from a few tears ; and weeping, I conceived to say somewhat of her death, in

* It will be observed that this poem is not what we now call a sonnet. Its structure, however, is analogous to that of the sonnet, being two sextets followed by two quatrains, instead of two quatrains followed by two triplets. Dante applies the term sonnet to both these forms of composition, and to no other.

guerdon of having seen her somewhere with my lady ; which thing I spake of in the latter end of the verses that I writ in this matter, as he will discern who understands. And I wrote two sonnets, which are these :

I

WEEP, Lovers, sith Love's very self doth weep,
 And sith the cause for weeping is so great ;
 When now so many dames, of such estate
 In worth, show with their eyes a grief so deep :
 For Death the churl has laid his leaden sleep
 Upon a damsel who was fair of late,
 Defacing all our earth should celebrate,—
 Yea all save virtue, which the soul doth keep.
 Now hearken how much Love did honour her.
 I myself saw him in his proper form
 Bending above the motionless sweet dead,
 And often gazing into Heaven ; for there
 The soul now sits which when her life was warm
 Dwelt with the joyful beauty that is fled.

This first sonnet is divided into three parts. In the first, I call and beseech the Faithful of Love to weep ; and I say that their Lord weeps, and that they, hearing the reason why he weeps, shall be more minded to listen to me. In the second, I relate this reason. In the third, I speak of honour done by Love to this Lady. The second part begins here, "When now so many dames" ; the third here, "Now hearken."

II

DEATH, alway cruel, Pity's foe in chief,
 Mother who brought forth grief,
 Merciless judgment and without appeal !
 Since thou alone hast made my heart to feel
 This sadness and unweal,
 My tongue upbraideth thee without relief.

And now (for I must rid thy name of ruth)
 Behoves me speak the truth
 Touching thy cruelty and wickedness :
 Not that they be not known ; but ne'ertheless
 I would give hate more stress
 With them that feed on love in very sooth.

Out of this world thou hast driven courtesy,
 And virtue, dearly prized in womanhood ;
 And out of youth's gay mood
 The lovely lightness is quite gone through thee.

Whom now I mourn, no man shall learn from me
 Save by the measure of these praises given.
 Whoso deserves not Heaven
 May never hope to have her company.*

* The commentators assert that the last two lines here do not allude to the dead lady, but to Beatrice. This would make the poem very clumsy in construction ; yet there must be some covert allusion to Beatrice, as Dante himself intimates. The only form in which I can trace it consists in the implied assertion that such person as *had* enjoyed the dead lady's society was worthy of heaven, and that person was Beatrice. Or indeed the allusion to Beatrice might be in the first poem, where he says that Love "*in forma vera*" (that is, Beatrice,) mourned over the corpse : as he afterwards says of Beatrice, "*Quella ha nome Amor.*" Most probably *both* allusions are intended.

This poem is divided into four parts. In the first I address Death by certain proper names of hers. In the second, speaking to her, I tell the reason why I am moved to denounce her. In the third, I rail against her. In the fourth, I turn to speak to a person undefined, although defined in my own conception. The second part commences here, "Since thou alone"; the third here, "And now (for I must)"; the fourth here, "Whoso deserves not."

Some days after the death of this lady, I had occasion to leave the city I speak of, and to go thitherwards where she abode who had formerly been my protection; albeit the end of my journey reached not altogether so far. And notwithstanding that I was visibly in the company of many, the journey was so irksome that I had scarcely sighing enough to ease my heart's heaviness; seeing that as I went, I left my beatitude behind me. Wherefore it came to pass that he who ruled me by virtue of my most gentle lady was made visible to my mind, in the light habit of a traveller, coarsely fashioned. He appeared to me troubled, and looked always on the ground; saving only that sometimes his eyes were turned towards a river which was clear and rapid, and which flowed along the path I was taking. And then I thought that Love called me and said to me these words: "I come from that lady who was so long thy surety; for the matter of whose return, I know that it may not be. Wherefore I have taken that heart which I made thee leave with her, and do bear it unto another lady, who, as she was, shall be thy surety;" (and when he named her I knew her well.) "And of these words I have spoken, if thou shouldst speak any again, let it be in such sort as that none shall perceive thereby that thy love was feigned for her, which thou must now feign for another." And when he had spoken thus, all my imagining was gone suddenly, for it seemed to me that Love became a part of myself: so that, changed as it were in mine aspect, I rode on full of thought the whole of that day, and with heavy sighing. And the day being over, I wrote this sonnet:—

A DAY ago, as I rode sullenly
 Upon a certain path that liked me not,
 I met Love midway while the air was hot,
 Clothed lightly as a wayfarer might be.
 And for the cheer he showed, he seemed to me
 As one who hath lost lordship he had got;
 Advancing tow'rd's me full of sorrowful thought,
 Bowing his forehead so that none should see.
 Then as I went, he called me by my name,
 Saying: "I journey since the morn was dim
 Thence where I made thy heart to be: which now
 I needs must bear unto another dame."
 Wherewith so much passed into me of him
 That he was gone, and I discerned not how.

This sonnet has three parts. In the first part, I tell how I met Love, and of his aspect. In the second, I tell what he said to me, although not in full, through the fear I had of discovering my secret. In the third, I say how he disappeared. The second part commences here, "Then as I went"; the third here, "Wherewith so much."

On my return, I set myself to seek out that lady whom my master had named to me while I journeyed sighing. And because I would be brief, I will now narrate that in a short while I made her my surety, in such sort that the matter was spoken of by many in terms scarcely courteous; through the which I had oftenwhiles many troublesome hours. And by this it happened (to wit: by this false and evil rumour which seemed to misfame me of vice) that she who was the destroyer

of all evil and the queen of all good, coming where I was, denied me her most sweet salutation, in the which alone was my blessedness.

And here it is fitting for me to depart a little from this present matter, that it may be rightly understood of what surpassing virtue her salutation was to me. To the which end I say that when she appeared in any place, it seemed to me, by the hope of her excellent salutation, that there was no man mine enemy any longer; and such warmth of charity came upon me that most certainly in that moment I would have pardoned whosoever had done me an injury; and if one should then have questioned me concerning any matter, I could only have said unto him "Love," with a countenance clothed in humbleness. And what time she made ready to salute me, the spirit of Love, destroying all other perceptions, thrust forth the feeble spirits of my eyes, saying, "Do homage unto your mistress," and putting itself in their place to obey: so that he who would, might then have beheld Love, beholding the lids of my eyes shake. And when this most gentle lady gave her salutation, Love, so far from being a medium beclouding mine intolerable beatitude, then bred in me such an overpowering sweetness that my body, being all subjected thereto, remained many times helpless and passive. Whereby it is made manifest that in her salutation alone was there any beatitude for me, which then very often went beyond my endurance.

And now, resuming my discourse, I will go on to relate that when, for the first time, this beatitude was denied me, I became possessed with such grief that, parting myself from others, I went into a lonely place to bathe the ground with most bitter tears: and when, by this heat of weeping, I was somewhat relieved, I betook myself to my chamber, where I could lament unheard. And there, having prayed to the Lady of all Mercies, and having said also, "O Love, aid thou thy servant," I went suddenly asleep like a beaten sobbing child. And in my sleep, towards the middle of it, I seemed to see in the room, seated at my side, a youth in very white raiment, who kept his eyes fixed on me in deep thought. And when he had gazed some time, I thought that he sighed and called to me in these words: "*Fili mi, tempus est ut prætermittantur simulata nostra.*"* And thereupon I seemed to know him; for the voice was the same wherewith he had spoken at other times in my sleep. Then looking at him, I perceived that he was weeping piteously, and that he seemed to be waiting for me to speak. Wherefore, taking heart, I began thus: "Why weepest thou, Master of all honour?" And he made answer to me: "*Ego tanquam centrum circuli, cui simili modo se habent circumferentiæ partes: tu autem non sic.*"† And thinking upon his words, they seemed to me obscure; so that again compelling myself unto speech, I asked of him: "What thing is this, Master, that thou hast spoken thus darkly?" To the which he made answer in the vulgar tongue: "Demand no more than may be useful to thee." Whereupon I began to discourse with him concerning her salutation which she had denied me; and when I had questioned him of the cause, he said these words: "Our Beatrice hath heard from certain persons, that the lady whom I named to thee while thou journeyedst full of sighs is sorely disquieted by thy solicitations: and therefore this most gracious creature,

* "My son, it is time for us to lay aside our counterfeiting."

† "I am as the centre of a circle, to the which all parts of the circumference bear an equal relation; but with thee it is not thus." This phrase seems to have remained as obscure to commentators as Dante found it at the moment. No one, as far as I know, has even fairly tried to find a meaning for it. To me the following appears a not unlikely one. Love is weeping on Dante's account, and not on his own. He says, "I am the centre of a circle (*Amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle*): therefore all lovable objects, whether in heaven or earth, or any part of the circle's circumference, are equally near to me. Not so thou, who wilt one day lose Beatrice when she goes to heaven." The phrase would thus contain an intimation of the death of Beatrice, accounting for Dante being next told not to inquire the meaning of the speech—"Demand no more than may be useful to thee."

who is the enemy of all disquiet, being fearful of such disquiet, refused to salute thee. For the which reason (albeit, in very sooth, thy secret must needs have become known to her by familiar observation) it is my will that thou compose certain things in rhyme, in the which thou shalt set forth how strong a mastership I have obtained over thee, through her; and how thou wast hers even from thy childhood. Also do thou call upon him that knoweth these things to bear witness to them, bidding him to speak with her thereof; the which I, who am he, will do willingly. And thus she shall be made to know thy desire; knowing which, she shall know likewise that they were deceived who spake of thee to her. And so write these things, that they shall seem rather to be spoken by a third person; and not directly by thee to her, which is scarce fitting. After the which, send them, not without me, where she may chance to hear them; but have them fitted with a pleasant music, into the which I will pass whensoever it needeth." With this speech he was away, and my sleep was broken up.

Whereupon, remembering me, I knew that I had beheld this vision during the ninth hour of the day; and I resolved that I would make a ditty, before I left my chamber, according to the words my master had spoken. And this is the ditty that I made:—

SONG, 'tis my will that thou do seek out Love,
And go with him where my dear lady is;
That so my cause, the which thy harmonies
Do plead, his better speech may clearly prove.

Thou goest, my Song, in such a courteous kind,
That even companionless
Thou mayst rely on thyself anywhere.
And yet, an thou wouldst get thee a safe mind,
First unto Love address
Thy steps; whose aid, mayhap, 'twere ill to spare,
Seeing that she to whom thou mak'st thy prayer
Is, as I think, ill-minded unto me,
And that if Love do not companion thee,
Thou'lt have perchance small cheer to tell me of.

With a sweet accent, when thou com'st to her,
Begin thou in these words,
First having craved a gracious audience:
"He who hath sent me as his messenger,
Lady, thus much records,
An thou but suffer him, in his defence.
Love, who comes with me, by thine influence
Can make this man do as it liketh him:
Wherefore, if this fault *is* or doth but *seem*
Do thou conceive: for his heart cannot move."

Say to her also: "Lady, his poor heart
Is so confirmed in faith
That all its thoughts are but of serving thee:
'Twas early thine, and could not swerve apart."
Then, if she wavereth,
Bid her ask Love, who knows if these things be.
And in the end, beg of her modestly
To pardon so much boldness: saying too:—
"If thou declare his death to be thy due,
The thing shall come to pass, as doth behove."

Then pray thou of the Master of all ruth,
 Before thou leave her there,
 That he befriend my cause and plead it well.
 "In guerdon of my sweet rhymes and my truth"
 (Entreat him) "stay with her;
 Let not the hope of thy poor servant fail;
 And if with her thy pleading should prevail,
 Let her look on him and give peace to him."
 Gentle my Song, if good to thee it seem,
 Do this: so worship shall be thine and love.

This ditty is divided into three parts. In the first, I tell it whither to go, and I encourage it, that it may go the more confidently, and I tell it whose company to join if it would go with confidence and without any danger. In the second, I say that which it behoves the ditty to set forth. In the third, I give it leave to start when it pleases, recommending its course to the arms of Fortune. The second part begins here, "With a sweet accent"; the third here, "Gentle my Song." Some might contradict me, and say that they understand not whom I address in the second person, seeing that the ditty is merely the very words I am speaking. And therefore I say that this doubt I intend to solve and clear up in this little book itself, at a more difficult passage, and then let him understand who now doubts, or would now contradict as aforesaid.

After this vision I have recorded, and having written those words which Love had dictated to me, I began to be harassed with many and divers thoughts, by each of which I was sorely tempted; and in especial, there were four among them that left me no rest. The first was this: "Certainly the lordship of Love is good; seeing that it diverts the mind from all mean things." The second was this: "Certainly the lordship of Love is evil; seeing that the more homage his servants pay to him, the more grievous and painful are the torments wherewith he torments them." The third was this: "The name of Love is so sweet in the hearing that it would not seem possible for its effects to be other than sweet; seeing that the name must needs be like unto the thing named: as it is written: *Nomina sunt consequentia rerum.*"* And the fourth was this: "The lady whom Love hath chosen out to govern thee is not as other ladies, whose hearts are easily moved."

And by each one of these thoughts I was so sorely assailed that I was like unto him who doubteth which path to take, and wishing to go, goeth not. And if I bethought myself to seek out some point at the which all these paths might be found to meet, I discerned but one way, and that irked me; to wit, to call upon Pity, and to commend myself unto her. And it was then that, feeling a desire to write somewhat thereof in rhyme, I wrote this sonnet:—

ALL my thoughts always speak to me of Love,
 Yet have between themselves such difference
 That while one bids me bow with mind and sense,
 A second saith, "Go to: look thou above";
 The third one, hoping, yields me joy enough;
 And with the last come tears, I scarce know whence:
 All of them craving pity in sore suspense,
 Trembling with fears that the heart knoweth of.
 And thus, being all unsure which path to take,
 Wishing to speak I know not what to say,
 And lose myself in amorous wanderings:
 Until, (my peace with all of them to make,)
 Unto mine enemy I needs must pray,
 My Lady Pity, for the help she brings.

* "Names are the consequents of things."

This sonnet may be divided into four parts. In the first, I say and propound that all my thoughts are concerning Love. In the second, I say that they are diverse, and I relate their diversity. In the third, I say wherein they all seem to agree. In the fourth, I say that, wishing to speak of Love, I know not from which of these thoughts to take my argument; and that if I would take it from all, I shall have to call upon mine enemy, my Lady Pity. "Lady," I say, as in a scornful mode of speech. The second begins here, "Yet have between themselves"; the third, "All of them craving"; the fourth, "And thus."

After this battling with many thoughts, it chanced on a day that my most gracious lady was with a gathering of ladies in a certain place; to the which I was conducted by a friend of mine; he thinking to do me a great pleasure by showing me the beauty of so many women. Then I, hardly knowing whereunto he conducted me, but trusting in him (who yet was leading his friend to the last verge of life), made question: "To what end are we come among these ladies?" and he answered: "To the end that they may be worthily served." And they were assembled around a gentlewoman who was given in marriage on that day; the custom of the city being that these should bear her company when she sat down for the first time at table in the house of her husband. Therefore I, as was my friend's pleasure, resolved to stay with him and do honour to those ladies.

But as soon as I had thus resolved, I began to feel a faintness and a throbbing at my left side, which soon took possession of my whole body. Whereupon I remember that I covertly leaned my back unto a painting that ran round the walls of that house; and being fearful lest my trembling should be discerned of them, I lifted mine eyes to look on those ladies, and then first perceived among them the excellent Beatrice. And when I perceived her, all my senses were overpowered by the great lordship that Love obtained, finding himself so near unto that most gracious being, until nothing but the spirits of sight remained to me; and even these remained driven out of their own instruments because Love entered in that honoured place of theirs, that so he might the better behold her. And although I was other than at first, I grieved for the spirits so expelled, which kept up a sore lament, saying: "If he had not in this wise thrust us forth, we also should behold the marvel of this lady." By this, many of her friends, having discerned my confusion, began to wonder; and together with herself, kept whispering of me and mocking me. Whereupon my friend, who knew not what to conceive, took me by the hands, and drawing me forth from among them, required to know what ailed me. Then, having first held me at quiet for a space until my perceptions were come back to me, I made answer to my friend: "Of a surety I have now set my feet on that point of life, beyond the which he must not pass who would return."*

Afterwards, leaving him, I went back to the room where I had wept before; and again weeping and ashamed, said: "If this lady but knew of my condition, I do not think that she would thus mock at me; nay, I am sure that she must needs feel some pity." And in my weeping I bethought me to write certain words, in the which, speaking to her, I should signify the occasion of my disfigurement, telling her also how I knew that she had no knowledge thereof; which, if it were known, I was certain must move others to pity. And then, because I hoped that peradventure it might come into her hearing, I wrote this sonnet:—

* It is difficult not to connect Dante's agony at this wedding-feast, with our knowledge that in her twenty-first year Beatrice was wedded to Simone de' Bardi. That she herself was the bride on this occasion might seem out of the question, from the fact of its not being in any way so stated: but on the other hand, Dante's silence throughout the *Vita Nuova* as regards her marriage (which must have brought deep sorrow even to his ideal love) is so startling, that we might almost be led to conceive in this passage the only intimation of it which he thought fit to give.

EVEN as the others mock, thou mockest me ;
 Not dreaming, noble lady, whence it is
 That I am taken with strange semblances,
 Seeing thy face which is so fair to see :
 For else, compassion would not suffer thee
 To grieve my heart with such harsh scoffs as these.
 Lo ! Love, when thou art present, sits at ease,
 And bears his mastership so mightily
 That all my troubled senses he thrusts out,
 So sorely tormenting some, and slaying some,
 Till none but he is left and has free range
 To gaze on thee. This makes my face to change
 Into another's ; while I stand all dumb,
 And hear my senses clamour in their rout.

This sonnet I divide not into parts, because a division is only made to open the meaning of the thing divided : and this, as it is sufficiently manifest through the reasons given, has no need of division. True it is that, amid the words whereby is shown the occasion of this sonnet, dubious words are to be found ; namely, when I say that Love fills all my spirits, but that the visual remain in life, only outside of their own instruments. And this difficulty it is impossible for any to solve who is not in equal guise liege unto Love ; and, to those who are so, that is manifest which would clear up the dubious words. And therefore it were not well for me to expound this difficulty, inasmuch as my speaking would be either fruitless or else superfluous.

A while after this strange disfigurement, I became possessed with a strong conception which left me but very seldom, and then to return quickly. And it was this : " Seeing that thou comest into such scorn by the companionship of this lady, wherefore seekest thou to behold her ? If she should ask thee this thing, what answer couldst thou make unto her ? yea, even though thou wert master of all thy faculties, and in no way hindered from answering." Unto the which, another very humble thought said in reply : " If I were master of all my faculties, and in no way hindered from answering, I would tell her that no sooner do I image to myself her marvellous beauty than I am possessed with the desire to behold her, the which is of so great strength that it kills and destroys in my memory all those things which might oppose it ; and it is therefore that the great anguish I have endured thereby is yet not enough to restrain me from seeking to behold her." And then, because of these thoughts, I resolved to write somewhat, wherein, having pleaded mine excuse, I should tell her of what I felt in her presence. Whereupon I wrote this sonnet :—

THE thoughts are broken in my memory,
 Thou lovely Joy, whene'er I see thy face ;
 When thou art near me, Love fills up the space,
 Often repeating, " If death irk thee, fly."
 My face shows my heart's colour, verily,
 Which, fainting, seeks for any leaning-place ;
 Till, in the drunken terror of disgrace,
 The very stones seem to be shrieking, " Die ! "
 It were a grievous sin, if one should not
 Strive then to comfort my bewildered mind
 (Though merely with a simple pitying)
 For the great anguish which thy scorn has wrought
 In the dead sight o' the eyes grown nearly blind,
 Which look for death as for a blessed thing.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first, I tell the cause why I abstain not from coming to this lady. In the second, I tell what befalls me through coming to her; and this part begins here, "When thou art near." And also this second part divides into five distinct statements. For, in the first, I say what Love, counselled by Reason, tells me when I am near the Lady. In the second, I set forth the state of my heart by the example of the face. In the third, I say how all ground of trust fails me. In the fourth, I say that he sins who shows not pity of me, which would give me some comfort. In the last, I say why people should take pity; namely, for the piteous look which comes into mine eyes; which piteous look is destroyed, that is, appeareth not unto others, through the jeering of this lady, who draws to the like action those who peradventure would see this piteousness. The second part begins here, "My face shows"; the third, "Till, in the drunken terror"; the fourth, "It were a grievous sin"; the fifth, "For the great anguish."

Thereafter, this sonnet bred in me desire to write down in verse four other things touching my condition, the which things it seemed to me that I had not yet made manifest. The first among these was the grief that possessed me very often, remembering the strangeness which Love wrought in me; the second was, how Love many times assailed me so suddenly and with such strength that I had no other life remaining except a thought which spake of my lady; the third was, how, when Love did battle with me in this wise, I would rise up all colourless, if so I might see my lady, conceiving that the sight of her would defend me against the assault of Love, and altogether forgetting that which her presence brought unto me; and the fourth was, how, when I saw her, the sight not only defended me not, but took away the little life that remained to me. And I said these four things in a sonnet, which is this:—

At whiles (yea oftentimes) I muse over
 The quality of anguish that is mine
 Through Love: then pity makes my voice to pine,
 Saying, "Is any else thus, anywhere?"
 Love smiteth me, whose strength is ill to bear;
 So that of all my life is left no sign
 Except one thought; and that, because 'tis thine,
 Leaves not the body but abideth there.
 And then if I, whom other aid forsook,
 Would aid myself, and innocent of art
 Would fain have sight of thee as a last hope,
 No sooner do I lift mine eyes to look
 Than the blood seems as shaken from my heart,
 And all my pulses beat at once and stop.

This sonnet is divided into four parts, four things being therein narrated; and as these are set forth above, I only proceed to distinguish the parts by their beginnings. Wherefore I say that the second part begins, "Love smiteth me"; the third, "And then if I"; the fourth, "No sooner do I lift."

After I had written these three last sonnets, wherein I spake unto my lady, telling her almost the whole of my condition, it seemed to me that I should be silent, having said enough concerning myself. But albeit I spake not to her again, yet it behoved me afterward to write of another matter, more noble than the foregoing. And for that the occasion of what I then wrote may be found pleasant in the hearing, I will relate it as briefly as I may.

Through the sore change in mine aspect, the secret of my heart was now understood of many. Which thing being thus, there came a day when certain ladies to whom it was well known (they having been with me at divers times in my trouble) were met together for the

pleasure of gentle company. And as I was going that way by chance, (but I think rather by the will of fortune,) I heard one of them call unto me, and she that called was a lady of very sweet speech. And when I had come close up with them, and perceived that they had not among them mine excellent lady, I was reassured; and saluted them, asking of their pleasure. The ladies were many; divers of whom were laughing one to another, while divers gazed at me as though I should speak anon. But when I still spake not, one of them, who before had been talking with another, addressed me by my name, saying, "To what end lovest thou this lady, seeing that thou canst not support her presence? Now tell us this thing, that we may know it: for certainly the end of such a love must be worthy of knowledge." And when she had spoken these words, not she only, but all they that were with her, began to observe me, waiting for my reply. Whereupon I said thus unto them: "Ladies, the end and aim of my Love was but the salutation of that lady of whom I conceive that ye are speaking; wherein alone I found that beatitude which is the goal of desire. And now that it hath pleased her to deny me this, Love, my Master, of his great goodness, hath placed all my beatitude there where my hope will not fail me." Then those ladies began to talk closely together; and as I have seen snow fall among the rain, so was their talk mingled with sighs. But after a little, that lady who had been the first to address me, addressed me again in these words: "We pray thee that thou wilt tell us wherein abideth this thy beatitude." And answering, I said but thus much: "In those words that do praise my lady." To the which she rejoined: "If thy speech were true, those words that thou didst write concerning thy condition would have been written with another intent."

Then I, being almost put to shame because of her answer, went out from among them; and as I walked, I said within myself: "Seeing that there is so much beatitude in those words which do praise my lady, wherefore hath my speech of her been different?" And then I resolved that thenceforward I would choose for the theme of my writings only the praise of this most gracious being. But when I had thought exceedingly, it seemed to me that I had taken to myself a theme which was much too lofty, so that I dared not begin; and I remained during several days in the desire of speaking, and the fear of beginning. After which it happened, as I passed one day along a path which lay beside a stream of very clear water, that there came upon me a great desire to say somewhat in rhyme: but when I began thinking how I should say it, methought that to speak of her were unseemly, unless I spoke to other ladies in the second person; which is to say, not to *any* other ladies, but only to such as are so called because they are gentle, let alone for mere womanhood. Whereupon I declare that my tongue spake as though by its own impulse, and said, "Ladies that have intelligence in love." These words I laid up in my mind with great gladness, conceiving to take them as my commencement. Wherefore, having returned to the city I spake of, and considered thereof during certain days, I began a poem with this beginning, constructed in the mode which will be seen below in its division. The poem begins here:—

LADIES that have intelligence in love,
 Of mine own lady I would speak with you;
 Not that I hope to count her praises through,
 But telling what I may, to ease my mind.
 And I declare that when I speak thereof,
 Love sheds such perfect sweetness over me
 That if my courage failed not, certainly
 To him my listeners must be all resign'd.
 Wherefore I will not speak in such large kind

That mine own speech should foil me, which were base ;
But only will discourse of her high grace

In these poor words, the best that I can find,
With you alone, dear dames and damozels :
'Twere ill to speak thereof with any else.

An Angel, of his blessed knowledge, saith

To God : " Lord, in the world that Thou hast made,
A miracle in action is display'd,

By reason of a soul whose splendours fare
Even hither : and since Heaven requireth
Nought saving her, for her it prayeth Thee,
Thy Saints crying aloud continually."

Yet Pity still defends our earthly share

In that sweet soul ; God answering thus the prayer :
" My well-belovèd, suffer that in peace
Your hope remain, while so My pleasure is,

There where one dwells who dreads the loss of her :
And who in Hell unto the doomed shall say,
' I have looked on that for which God's chosen pray.' "

My lady is desired in the high Heaven :

Wherefore, it now behoveth me to tell,

Saying : Let any maid that would be well

Esteemed keep with her : for as she goes by,
Into foul hearts a deathly chill is driven
By Love, that makes ill thought to perish there :
While any who endures to gaze on her

Must either be ennobled, or else die.

When one deserving to be raised so high
Is found, 'tis then her power attains its proof,
Making his heart strong for his soul's behoof

With the full strength of meek humility.

Also this virtue owns she, by God's will :

Who speaks with her can never come to ill.

Love saith concerning her : " How chanceth it

That flesh, which is of dust, should be thus pure ? "

Then, gazing always, he makes oath : " Forsure,

This is a creature of God till now unknown."

She hath that paleness of the pearl that's fit

In a fair woman, so much and not more ;

She is as high as Nature's skill can soar ;

Beauty is tried by her comparison.

Whatever her sweet eyes are turned upon,
Spirits of love do issue thence in flame,

Which through their eyes who then may look on them

Pierce to the heart's deep chamber every one.

And in her smile Love's image you may see ;

Whence none can gaze upon her steadfastly.

Dear Song, I know thou wilt hold gentle speech

With many ladies, when I send thee forth :

Wherefore (being mindful that thou hadst thy birth

From Love, and art a modest, simple child),

Whomso thou meetest, say thou this to each :

" Give me good speed ! To her I wend along

In whose much strength my weakness is made strong."

And if, i' the end, thou wouldst not be beguiled

Of all thy labour, seek not the defiled

And common sort ; but rather choose to be
Where man and woman dwell in courtesy.

So to the road thou shalt be reconciled,
And find the lady, and with the lady, Love.
Commend thou me to each, as doth behove.

This poem, that it may be better understood, I will divide more subtly than the others preceding ; and therefore I will make three parts of it. The first part is a proem to the words following. The second is the matter treated of. The third is, as it were, a handmaid to the preceding words. The second begins here, " An angel " ; the third here, " Dear Song, I know." The first part is divided into four. In the first, I say to whom I mean to speak of my Lady, and wherefore I will so speak. In the second, I say what she appears to myself to be when I reflect upon her excellence, and what I would utter if I lost not courage. In the third, I say what it is I purpose to speak so as not to be impeded by faintheartedness. In the fourth, repeating to whom I purpose speaking, I tell the reason why I speak to them. The second begins here, " And I declare " ; the third here, " Wherefore I will not speak " ; the fourth here, " With you alone." Then, when I say " An angel," I begin treating of this lady : and this part is divided into two. In the first, I tell what is understood of her in heaven. In the second, I tell what is understood of her on earth : here, " My lady is desired." This second part is divided into two ; for, in the first, I speak of her as regards the nobleness of her soul, relating some of her virtues proceeding from her soul ; in the second, I speak of her as regards the nobleness of her body, narrating some of her beauties : here, " Love saith concerning her." This second part is divided into two, for, in the first, I speak of certain beauties which belong to the whole person ; in the second, I speak of certain beauties which belong to a distinct part of the person : here, " Whatever her sweet eyes." This second part is divided into two ; for, in the one, I speak of the eyes, which are the beginning of love ; in the second, I speak of the mouth, which is the end of love. And that every vicious thought may be discarded herefrom, let the reader remember that it is above written that the greeting of this lady, which was an act of her mouth, was the goal of my desires, while I could receive it. Then, when I say, " Dear Song, I know," I add a stanza as it were handmaid to the others, wherein I say what I desire from this my poem. And because this last part is easy to understand, I trouble not myself with more divisions. I say, indeed, that the further to open the meaning of this poem, more minute divisions ought to be used ; but nevertheless he who is not of wit enough to understand it by these which have been already made is welcome to leave it alone ; for certes, I fear I have communicated its sense to too many by these present divisions, if it so happened that many should hear it.

When this song was a little gone abroad, a certain one of my friends, hearing the same, was pleased to question me, that I should tell him what thing love is ; it may be, conceiving from the words thus heard a hope of me beyond my desert. Wherefore I, thinking that after such discourse it were well to say somewhat of the nature of Love, and also in accordance with my friend's desire, proposed to myself to write certain words in the which I should treat of this argument. And the sonnet that I then made is this :—

Love and the gentle heart are one same thing,
Even as the wise man * in his ditty saith :
Each, of itself, would be such life in death
As rational soul bereft of reasoning.

* Guido Guinicelli, in the canzone which begins, " Within the gentle heart Love shelters him." (See page 432.)

'Tis Nature makes them when she loves : a king
 Love is, whose palace where he sojourneth
 Is called the Heart ; there draws he quiet breath
 At first, with brief or longer slumbering.
 Then beauty seen in virtuous womankind
 Will make the eyes desire, and through the heart
 Send the desiring of the eyes again ;
 Where often it abides so long enshrined
 That Love at length out of his sleep will start.
 And women feel the same for worthy men.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first, I speak of him according to his power. In the second, I speak of him according as his power translates itself into act. The second part begins here, "Then beauty seen." The first is divided into two. In the first, I say in what subject this power exists. In the second, I say how this subject and this power are produced together, and how the one regards the other, as form does matter. The second begins here, "'Tis Nature." Afterwards when I say, "Then beauty seen in virtuous womankind," I say how this power translates itself into act ; and, first, how it so translates itself in a man, then how it so translates itself in a woman : here, "And women feel."

Having treated of love in the foregoing, it appeared to me that I should also say something in praise of my lady, wherein it might be set forth how love manifested itself when produced by her ; and how not only she could awaken it where it slept, but where it was not she could marvellously create it. To the which end I wrote another sonnet ; and it is this :—

My lady carries love within her eyes ;
 All that she looks on is made pleasanter ;
 Upon her path men turn to gaze at her ;
 He whom she greeteth feels his heart to rise,
 And droops his troubled visage, full of sighs,
 And of his evil heart is then aware :
 Hate loves, and pride becomes a worshipper.
 O women, help to praise her in somewise.
 Humbleness, and the hope that hopeth well,
 By speech of hers into the mind are brought,
 And who beholds is blessed oftenwhiles.
 The look she hath when she a little smiles
 Cannot be said, nor holden in the thought ;
 'Tis such a new and gracious miracle.

This sonnet has three sections. In the first, I say how this lady brings this power into action by those most noble features, her eyes ; and, in the third, I say this same as to that most noble feature, her mouth. And between these two sections is a little section, which asks, as it were, help for the previous section and the subsequent ; and it begins here, "O women, help." The third begins here, "Humbleness." The first is divided into three ; for, in the first, I say how she with power makes noble that which she looks upon ; and this is as much as to say that she brings Love, in power, thither where he is not. In the second, I say how she brings Love, in act, into the hearts of all those whom she sees. In the third, I tell what she afterwards, with virtue, operates upon their hearts. The second begins, "Upon her path" ; the third, "He whom she greeteth." Then, when I say, "O women, help," I intimate to whom it is my intention to speak, calling on women to help me to honour her. Then, when I say, "Humbleness," I say that same which is said in the first part, regarding two acts of her mouth, one whereof is her most sweet speech, and the other her marvellous smile. Only, I say not of this last how it operates

upon the hearts of others, because memory cannot retain this smile, nor its operation.

Not many days after this (it being the will of the most High God, who also from Himself put not away death), the father of wonderful Beatrice, going out of this life, passed certainly into glory. Thereby it happened, as of very sooth it might not be otherwise, that this lady was made full of the bitterness of grief : seeing that such a parting is very grievous unto those friends who are left, and that no other friendship is like to that between a good parent and a good child ; and furthermore considering that this lady was good in the supreme degree, and her father (as by many it hath been truly averred) of exceeding goodness. And because it is the usage of that city that men meet with men in such a grief, and women with women, certain ladies of her companionship gathered themselves unto Beatrice, where she kept alone in her weeping : and as they passed in and out, I could hear them speak concerning her, how she wept. At length two of them went by me, who said : " Certainly she grieveth in such sort that one might die for pity, beholding her." Then, feeling the tears upon my face, I put up my hands to hide them : and had it not been that I hoped to hear more concerning her (seeing that where I sat, her friends passed continually in and out), I should assuredly have gone thence to be alone, when I felt the tears come. But as I still sat in that place, certain ladies again passed near me, who were saying among themselves : " Which of us shall be joyful any more, who have listened to this lady in her piteous sorrow ? " And there were others who said as they went by me : " He that sitteth here could not weep more if he had beheld her as we have beheld her ; " and again : " He is so altered that he seemeth not as himself." And still as the ladies passed to and fro, I could hear them speak after this fashion of her and of me.

Wherefore afterwards, having considered and perceiving that there was herein matter for poesy, I resolved that I would write certain rhymes in the which should be contained all that those ladies had said. And because I would willingly have spoken to them if it had not been for discreetness, I made in my rhymes as though I had spoken and they had answered me. And thereof I wrote two sonnets ; in the first of which I addressed them as I would fain have done ; and in the second related their answer, using the speech that I had heard from them, as though it had been spoken unto myself. And the sonnets are these :—

I

You that thus wear a modest countenance
 With lids weigh'd down by the heart's heaviness,
 Whence come you, that among you every face
 Appears the same, for its pale troubled glance ?
 Have you beheld my lady's face, perchance,
 Bow'd with the grief that Love makes full of grace ?
 Say now, " This thing is thus " ; as my heart says,
 Marking your grave and sorrowful advance.
 And if indeed you come from where she sighs
 And mourns, may it please you (for his heart's relief)
 To tell how it fares with her unto him
 Who knows that you have wept, seeing your eyes,
 And is so grieved with looking on your grief
 That his heart trembles and his sight grows dim.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first, I call and ask these ladies whether they come from her, telling them that I think they do, because they return the nobler. In the second, I pray them to tell me of her ; and the second begins here, " And if indeed,"

II

CANST thou indeed be he that still would sing
 Of our dear lady unto none but us ?
 For though thy voice confirms that it is thus,
 Thy visage might another witness bring.
 And wherefore is thy grief so sore a thing
 That grieving thou mak'st others dolorous ?
 Hast thou too seen her weep, that thou from us
 Canst not conceal thine inward sorrowing ?
 Nay, leave our woe to us : let us alone :
 'Twere sin if one should strive to soothe our woe,
 For in her weeping we have heard her speak :
 Also her look's so full of her heart's moan
 That they who should behold her, looking so,
 Must fall aswoon, feeling all life grow weak.

This sonnet has four parts, as the ladies in whose person I reply had four forms of answer. And, because these are sufficiently shown above, I stay not to explain the purport of the parts, and therefore I only discriminate them. The second begins here, "And wherefore is thy grief"; the third here, "Nay, leave our woe"; the fourth, "Also her look."

A few days after this, my body became afflicted with a painful infirmity, whereby I suffered bitter anguish for many days, which at last brought me unto such weakness that I could no longer move. And I remember that on the ninth day, being overcome with intolerable pain, a thought came into my mind concerning my lady : but when it had a little nourished this thought, my mind returned to its brooding over mine enfeebled body. And then perceiving how frail a thing life is, even though health keep with it, the matter seemed to me so pitiful that I could not choose but weep ; and weeping I said within myself : "Certainly it must some time come to pass that the very gentle Beatrice will die." Then, feeling bewildered, I closed mine eyes ; and my brain began to be in travail as the brain of one frantic, and to have such imaginations as here follow.

And at the first, it seemed to me that I saw certain faces of women with their hair loosened, which called out to me, "Thou shalt surely die"; after the which, other terrible and unknown appearances said unto me, "Thou art dead." At length, as my phantasy held on in its wanderings, I came to be I knew not where, and to behold a throng of dishevelled ladies wonderfully sad, who kept going hither and thither weeping. Then the sun went out, so that the stars showed themselves, and they were of such a colour that I knew they must be weeping : and it seemed to me that the birds fell dead out of the sky, and that there were great earthquakes. With that, while I wondered in my trance, and was filled with a grievous fear, I conceived that a certain friend came unto me and said : "Hast thou not heard ? She that was thine excellent lady hath been taken out of life." Then I began to weep very piteously ; and not only in mine imagination, but with mine eyes, which were wet with tears. And I seemed to look towards Heaven, and to behold a multitude of angels who were returning upwards, having before them an exceedingly white cloud : and these angels were singing together gloriously, and the words of their song were these : "*Osanna in excelsis*"; and there was no more that I heard. Then my heart that was so full of love said unto me : "It is true that our lady lieth dead ;" and it seemed to me that I went to look upon the body wherein that blessed and most noble spirit had had its abiding-place. And so strong was this idle imagining, that it made me to behold my lady in death, whose head certain ladies seemed to be covering with a white veil ; and who was so humble of her aspect that it was as though she had said, "I

have attained to look on the beginning of peace." And therewithal I came unto such humility by the sight of her, that I cried out upon Death, saying: "Now come unto me, and be not bitter against me any longer: surely, there where thou hast been, thou hast learned gentleness. Wherefore come now unto me who do greatly desire thee: seest thou not that I wear thy colour already?" And when I had seen all those offices performed that are fitting to be done unto the dead, it seemed to me that I went back unto mine own chamber, and looked up towards Heaven. And so strong was my phantasy that I wept again in very truth, and said with my true voice: "O excellent soul! how blessed is he that now looketh upon thee!"

And as I said these words, with a painful anguish of sobbing and another prayer unto Death, a young and gentle lady, who had been standing beside me where I lay, conceiving that I wept and cried out because of the pain of mine infirmity, was taken with trembling and began to shed tears. Whereby other ladies, who were about the room, becoming aware of my discomfort by reason of the moan that she made (who indeed was of my very near kindred), led her away from where I was, and then set themselves to awaken me, thinking that I dreamed, and saying: "Sleep no longer, and be not disquieted."

Then, by their words, this strong imagination was brought suddenly to an end, at the moment that I was about to say, "O Beatrice! peace be with thee." And already I had said, "O Beatrice!" when being aroused, I opened mine eyes, and knew that it had been a deception. But albeit I had indeed uttered her name, yet my voice was so broken with sobs, that it was not understood by these ladies; so that in spite of the sore shame that I felt, I turned towards them by Love's counselling. And when they beheld me, they began to say, "He seemeth as one dead," and to whisper among themselves, "Let us strive if we may not comfort him." Whereupon they spake to me many soothing words, and questioned me moreover touching the cause of my fear. Then I, being somewhat reassured, and having perceived that it was a mere phantasy, said unto them, "This thing it was that made me afraid;" and told them of all that I had seen, from the beginning even unto the end, but without once speaking the name of my lady. Also, after I had recovered from my sickness, I bethought me to write these things in rhyme; deeming it a lovely thing to be known. Whereof I wrote this poem:

A VERY pitiful lady, very young,
 Exceeding rich in human sympathies,
 Stood by, what time I clamour'd upon Death;
 And at the wild words wandering on my tongue
 And at the piteous look within mine eyes
 She was affrighted, that sobs choked her breath.
 So by her weeping where I lay beneath,
 Some other gentle ladies came to know
 My state, and made her go:
 Afterward, bending themselves over me,
 One said, "Awaken thee!"
 And one, "What thing thy sleep disquieteth?"
 With that, my soul woke up from its eclipse,
 The while my lady's name rose to my lips:

But utter'd in a voice so sob-broken,
 So feeble with the agony of tears,
 That I alone might hear it in my heart;
 And though that look was on my visage then
 Which he who is ashamed so plainly wears,
 Love made that I through shame held not apart,

But gazed upon them. And my hue was such
That they look'd at each other and thought of death;
Saying under their breath
Most tenderly, "O let us comfort him:"
Then unto me: "What dream

Was thine, that it hath shaken thee so much?"
And when I was a little comforted,
"This, ladies, was the dream I dreamt," I said.

"I was a-thinking how life fails with us
Suddenly after such a little while;
When Love sobb'd in my heart, which is his home.
Whereby my spirit wax'd so dolorous

That in myself I said, with sick recoil:
'Yea, to my lady too this Death must come.'
And therewithal such a bewilderment
Possess'd me, that I shut mine eyes for peace;
And in my brain did cease
Order of thought, and every healthful thing.
Afterwards, wandering

Amid a swarm of doubts that came and went,
Some certain women's faces hurried by,
And shrieked to me, 'Thou too shalt die, shalt die!'

"Then saw I many broken hinted sights
In the uncertain state I stepp'd into.
Meseem'd to be I know not in what place,
Where ladies through the streets, like mournful lights,
Ran with loose hair, and eyes that frighten'd you,
By their own terror, and a pale amaze:
The while, little by little, as I thought,
The sun ceased, and the stars began to gather,
And each wept at the other;
And birds dropp'd in mid-flight out of the sky;
And earth shook suddenly;
And I was 'ware of one, hoarse and tired out,
Who ask'd of me: 'Hast thou not heard it said? . . .
Thy lady, she that was so fair, is dead.'

"Then lifting up mine eyes, as the tears came,
I saw the Angels, like a rain of manna,
In a long flight flying back Heavenward;
Having a little cloud in front of them,
After the which they went and said, 'Hosanna';
And if they had said more, you should have heard.
Then Love said, 'Now shall all things be made clear:
Come and behold our lady where she lies.'
These 'wildering phantasies
Then carried me to see my lady dead.
Even as I there was led,

Her ladies with a veil were covering her;
And with her was such very humbleness
That she appeared to say, 'I am at peace.'

"And I became so humble in my grief,
Seeing in her such deep humility,
That I said: 'Death, I hold thee passing good
Henceforth, and a most gentle sweet relief,
Since my dear love has chosen to dwell with thee:
Pity, not hate, is thine, well understood,

Lo! I do so desire to see thy face
That I am like as one who nears the tomb;
My soul entreats thee, Come.'
Then I departed, having made my moan;
And when I was alone

I said, and cast my eyes to the High Place:
'Blessed is he, fair soul, who meets thy glance!'
... Just then you woke me, of your complaisaunce."

This poem has two parts. In the first, speaking to a person undefined, I tell how I was aroused from a vain phantasy by certain ladies, and how I promised them to tell what it was. In the second, I say how I told them. The second part begins here, "I was a-thinking." The first part divides into two. In the first, I tell that which certain ladies, and which one singly, did and said because of my phantasy, before I had returned into my right senses. In the second, I tell what these ladies said to me after I had left off this wandering: and it begins here, "But uttered in a voice." Then, when I say, "I was a-thinking," I say how I told them this my imagination; and concerning this I have two parts. In the first, I tell, in order, this imagination. In the second, saying at what time they called me, I covertly thank them: and this part begins here, "Just then you woke me."

After this empty imagining, it happened on a day, as I sat thoughtful, that I was taken with such a strong trembling at the heart, that it could not have been otherwise in the presence of my lady. Whereupon I perceived that there was an appearance of Love beside me, and I seemed to see him coming from my lady; and he said, not aloud but within my heart: "Now take heed that thou bless the day when I entered into thee; for it is fitting that thou shouldst do so." And with that my heart was so full of gladness, that I could hardly believe it to be of very truth mine own heart and not another.

A short while after these words which my heart spoke to me with the tongue of Love, I saw coming towards me a certain lady who was very famous for her beauty, and of whom that friend whom I have already called the first among my friends had long been enamoured. This lady's right name was Joan; but because of her comeliness (or at least it was so imagined) she was called of many *Primavera* (Spring), and went by that name among them. Then looking again, I perceived that the most noble Beatrice followed after her. And when both these ladies had passed by me, it seemed to me that Love spake again in my heart, saying: "She that came first was called Spring, only because of that which was to happen on this day. And it was I myself who caused that name to be given her; seeing that as the Spring cometh first in the year, so should she come first on this day,* when Beatrice was to show herself after the vision of her servant. And even if thou go about to consider her right name, it is also as one should say, 'She shall come first': inasmuch as her name, Joan, is taken from that John who went before the True Light, saying: '*Ego vox clamantis in deserto: Parate viam Domini.*'"† And also it seemed to me that he added other words, to wit: "He who should inquire delicately touching this matter could not but call Beatrice by mine own name, which is to say, Love; beholding her so like unto me."

Then I, having thought of this, imagined to write it with rhymes and send it unto my chief friend; but setting aside certain words ‡

* There is a play in the original upon the words *Primavera* (Spring) and *prima verrà* (she shall come first), to which I have given as near an equivalent as I could.

† "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.'"

‡ That is (as I understand it), suppressing, from delicacy towards his friend, the words in which Love describes Joan as merely the forerunner of Beatrice. And perhaps in the latter part of this sentence a reproach is gently conveyed to the fickle Guido Cavalcanti, who may already have transferred his homage (though Dante had not then learned it) from Joan to Mandetta. (See his Poems.)

which seemed proper to be set aside, because I believed that his heart still regarded the beauty of her that was called Spring. And I wrote this sonnet :—

I FELT a spirit of love begin to stir
 Within my heart, long time unfelt till then ;
 And saw Love coming towards me fair and fain,
 (That I scarce knew him for his joyful cheer),
 Saying, " Be now indeed my worshipper !"
 And in his speech he laugh'd and laugh'd again.
 Then, while it was his pleasure to remain,
 I chanced to look the way he had drawn near,
 And saw the Ladies Joan and Beatrice
 Approach me, this the other following,
 One and a second marvel instantly.
 And even as now my memory speaketh this,
 Love spake it then : " The first is christen'd Spring ;
 The second Love, she is so like to me."

This sonnet has many parts : whereof the first tells how I felt awakened within my heart the accustomed tremor, and how it seemed that Love appeared to me joyful from afar. The second says how it appeared to me that Love spake within my heart, and what was his aspect. The third tells how, after he had in such wise been with me a space, I saw and heard certain things. The second part begins here, " Saying, ' Be now '"; the third here, " Then, while it was his pleasure." The third part divides into two. In the first, I say what I saw. In the second, I say what I heard ; and it begins here, " Love spake it then."

It might be here objected unto me, (and even by one worthy of controversy,) that I have spoken of Love as though it were a thing outward and visible : not only a spiritual essence, but as a bodily substance also. The which thing, in absolute truth, is a fallacy ; Love not being of itself a substance, but an accident of substance. Yet that I speak of Love as though it were a thing tangible and even human, appears by three things which I say thereof. And firstly, I say that I perceived Love coming towards me ; whereby, seeing that *to come* bespeaks locomotion, and seeing also how philosophy teacheth us that none but a corporeal substance hath locomotion, it seemeth that I speak of Love as of a corporeal substance. And secondly, I say that Love smiled : and thirdly, that Love spake ; faculties (and especially the risible faculty) which appear proper unto man : whereby it further seemeth that I speak of Love as of a man. Now that this matter may be explained, (as is fitting), it must first be remembered that anciently they who wrote poems of Love wrote not in the vulgar tongue, but rather certain poets in the Latin tongue. I mean, among us, although perchance the same may have been among others, and although likewise, as among the Greeks, they were not writers of spoken language, but men of letters treated of these things.* And indeed it is not a great number of years since poetry began to be made in the vulgar tongue ; the writing of rhymes in spoken language corresponding to the writing in metre of Latin verse, by a certain analogy. And I say that it is but a little while, because if we examine the language of *oco* and the language of *sl*,† we shall not find in those

* On reading Dante's treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, it will be found that the distinction which he intends here is not between one language, or dialect, and another ; but between " vulgar speech " (that is, the language handed down from mother to son without any conscious use of grammar or syntax), and language as regulated by grammarians and the laws of literary composition, and which Dante calls simply " Grammar." A great deal might be said on the bearings of the present passage, but it is no part of my plan to enter on such questions.

† *I.e.*, the languages of Provence and Tuscany.

tongues any written thing of an earlier date than the last hundred and fifty years. Also the reason why certain of a very mean sort obtained at the first some fame as poets is, that before them no man has written verses in the language of *sì* : and of these, the first was moved to the writing of such verses by the wish to make himself understood of a certain lady, unto whom Latin poetry was difficult. This thing is against such as rhyme concerning other matters than love ; that mode of speech having been first used for the expression of love alone.* Wherefore, seeing that poets have a license allowed them that is not allowed unto the writers of prose, and seeing also that they who write in rhyme are simply poets in the vulgar tongue, it becomes fitting and reasonable that a larger license should be given to these than to other modern writers ; and that any metaphor or rhetorical similitude which is permitted unto poets, should also be counted not unseemly in the rhymers of the vulgar tongue. Thus, if we perceive that the former have caused inanimate things to speak as though they had sense and reason, and to discourse one with another ; yea, and not only actual things, but such also as have no real existence (seeing that they have made things which are not, to speak ; and oftentimes written of those which are merely accidents as though they were substances and things human) ; it should therefore be permitted to the latter to do the like ; which is to say, not inconsiderately, but with such sufficient motive as may afterwards be set forth in prose.

That the Latin poets have done thus, appears through Virgil, where he saith that Juno (to wit, a goddess hostile to the Trojans) spake unto Æolus, master of the Winds ; as it is written in the first book of the *Æneid*, *Æole, namque tibi, etc.* ; and that this master of the Winds made reply : *Tuus, o regina, quid optes—Explorare labor, mihi jussa capessere fas est.* And through the same poet, the inanimate thing speaketh unto the animate, in the third book of the *Æneid*, where it is written : *Dardanidæ duri, etc.* With Lucan, the animate thing speaketh to the inanimate ; as thus : *Multum, Roma, tamen debes civilibus armis.* In Horace, man is made to speak to his own intelligence as unto another person : (and not only hath Horace done this, but herein he followeth the excellent Homer,) as thus in his *Poetics* : *Dic mihi, Musa, virum, etc.* Through Ovid, Love speaketh as a human creature, in the beginning of his discourse *De Remediis Amoris* : as thus : *Bella mihi, video, bella parantur, ait.* By which ensamples this thing shall be made manifest unto such as may be offended at any part of this my book. And lest some of the common sort should be moved to jeering hereat, I will here add, that neither did these ancient poets speak thus without consideration, nor should they who are makers of rhyme in our day write after the same fashion, having no reason in what they write ; for it were a shameful thing if one should rhyme under the semblance of metaphor or rhetorical similitude, and afterwards, being questioned thereof, should be unable to rid his words of such semblance, unto their right understanding. Of whom, (to wit, of such as rhyme thus foolishly,) myself and the first among my friends do know many.

But returning to the matter of my discourse. This excellent lady of whom I spake in what hath gone before, came at last into such favour with all men, that when she passed anywhere folk ran to behold her ; which thing was a deep joy to me : and when she drew near unto any, so much truth and simpleness entered into his heart, that

* It strikes me that this curious passage furnishes a reason, hitherto (I believe) overlooked, why Dante put such of his lyrical poems as relate to philosophy into the form of love-poems. He liked writing in Italian rhyme rather than Latin metre ; he thought Italian rhyme ought to be confined to love-poems : therefore whatever he wrote (at this age) had to take the form of a love-poem. Thus any poem by Dante not concerning love is later than his twenty-seventh year (1291-2), when he wrote the prose of the *Vita Nuova* ; the poetry having been written earlier, at the time of the events referred to.

he dared neither to lift his eyes nor to return her salutation : and unto this, many who have felt it can bear witness. She went along crowned and clothed with humility, showing no whit of pride in all that she heard and saw : and when she had gone by, it was said of many, " This is not a woman, but one of the beautiful angels of Heaven : " and there were some that said : " This is surely a miracle ; blessed be the Lord, who hath power to work thus marvellously." I say, of very sooth, that she showed herself so gentle and so full of all perfection, that she bred in those who looked upon her a soothing quiet beyond any speech ; neither could any look upon her without sighing immediately. These things, and things yet more wonderful, were brought to pass through her miraculous virtue. Wherefore I, considering thereof and wishing to resume the endless tale of her praises, resolved to write somewhat wherein I might dwell on her surpassing influence ; to the end that not only they who had beheld her, but others also, might know as much concerning her as words could give to the understanding. And it was then that I wrote this sonnet :—

My lady looks so gentle and so pure
 When yielding salutation by the way,
 That the tongue trembles and has nought to say,
 And the eyes, which fain would see, may not endure.
 And still, amid the praise she hears secure,
 She walks with humbleness for her array ;
 Seeming a creature sent from Heaven to stay
 On earth, and show a miracle made sure.
 She is so pleasant in the eyes of men
 That through the sight the inmost heart doth gain
 A sweetness which needs proof to know it by :
 And from between her lips there seems to move
 A soothing essence that is full of love,
 Saying for ever to the spirit, " Sigh ! "

This sonnet is so easy to understand, from what is afore narrated, that it needs no division ; and therefore, leaving it, I say also that this excellent lady came into such favour with all men, that not only she herself was honoured and commended, but through her companionship, honour and commendation came unto others. Wherefore I, perceiving this, and wishing that it should also be made manifest to those that beheld it not, wrote the sonnet here following ; wherein is signified the power which her virtue had upon other ladies :—

For certain he hath seen all perfectness
 Who among other ladies hath seen mine :
 They that go with her humbly should combine
 To thank their God for such peculiar grace,
 So perfect is the beauty of her face
 That it begets in no wise any sign
 Of envy, but draws round her a clear line
 Of love, and blessed faith, and gentleness.
 Merely the sight of her makes all things bow :
 Not she herself alone is holier
 Than all ; but hers, through her, are raised above.
 From all her acts such lovely graces flow
 That truly one may never think of her
 Without a passion of exceeding love.

This sonnet has three parts. In the first, I say in what company this lady appeared most wondrous. In the second, I say how gracious was

her society. In the third, I tell of the things which she, with power, worked upon others. The second begins here, "They that go with her"; the third here, "So perfect." This last part divides into three. In the first, I tell what she operated upon women, that is, by their own faculties. In the second, I tell what she operated in them through others. In the third, I say how she not only operated in women, but in all people; and not only while herself present, but, by memory of her, operated wondrously. The second begins here, "Merely the sight"; the third here, "From all her acts."

Thereafter on a day, I began to consider that which I had said of my lady: to wit, in these two sonnets aforegone: and becoming aware that I had not spoken of her immediate effect on me at that especial time, it seemed to me that I had spoken defectively. Whereupon I resolved to write somewhat of the manner wherein I was then subject to her influence, and of what her influence then was. And conceiving that I should not be able to say these things in the small compass of a sonnet, I began therefore a poem with this beginning:—

LOVE hath so long possessed me for his own
 And made his lordship so familiar
 That he, who at first irked me, is now grown
 Unto my heart as its best secrets are.
 And thus, when he in such sore wise doth mar
 My life that all its strength seems gone from it,
 Mine inmost being then feels throughly quit
 Of anguish, and all evil keeps afar.
 Love also gathers to such power in me
 That my sighs speak, each one a grievous thing,
 Always soliciting
 My lady's salutation piteously.
 Whenever she beholds me, it is so,
 Who is more sweet than any words can show.

* * * * *

*Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo! facta est quasi vidua domina gentium! **

I was still occupied with this poem, (having composed thereof only the above written stanza,) when the Lord God of justice called my most gracious lady unto Himself, that she might be glorious under the banner of that blessed Queen Mary, whose name had always a deep reverence in the words of holy Beatrice. And because haply it might be found good that I should say somewhat concerning her departure, I will herein declare what are the reasons which make that I shall not do so.

And the reasons are three. The first is, that such matter belongeth not of right to the present argument; if one consider the opening of this little book. The second is, that even though the present argument required it, my pen doth not suffice to write in a fit manner of this thing. And the third is, that were it both possible and of absolute necessity, it would still be unseemly for me to speak thereof, seeing that thereby it must behove me to speak also mine own praises: a thing that in whosoever doeth it is worthy of blame. For the which reasons, I will leave this matter to be treated of by some other than myself.

Nevertheless, as the number nine, which number hath often had mention in what hath gone before, (and not, as it might appear, without reason,) seems also to have borne a part in the manner of her death: it is therefore right that I should say somewhat thereof.

* "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow, she that was great among the nations!"—*Lamentations of Jeremiah*, i. 1.

And for this cause, having first said what was the part it bore herein, I will afterwards point out a reason which made that this number was so closely allied unto my lady.

I say, then, that according to the division of time in Italy her most noble spirit departed from among us in the first hour of the ninth day of the month; and according to the division of time in Syria, in the ninth month of the year: seeing that Tismim, which with us is October, is there the first month. Also she was taken from among us in that year of our reckoning (to wit, of the years of our Lord) in which the perfect number was nine times multiplied within that century wherein she was born into the world: which is to say, the thirteenth century of Christians.*

And touching the reason why this number was so closely allied unto her, it may peradventure be this. According to Ptolemy, (and also to the Christian verity,) the revolving heavens are nine; and according to the common opinion among astrologers, these nine heavens together have influence over the earth. Wherefore it would appear that this number was thus allied unto her for the purpose of signifying that, at her birth, all these nine heavens were at perfect unity with each other as to their influence. This is one reason that may be brought: but more narrowly considering, and according to the infallible truth, this number was her own self: that is to say, by similitude. As thus. The number three is the root of the number nine; seeing that without the interposition of any other number, being multiplied merely by itself, it produceth nine, as we manifestly perceive that three times three are nine. Thus, three being of itself the efficient of nine, and the Great Efficient of Miracles being of Himself Three Persons (to wit: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), which, being Three, are also One:—this lady was accompanied by the number nine to the end that men might clearly perceive her to be a nine, that is, a miracle, whose only root is the Holy Trinity. It may be that a more subtle person would find for this thing a reason of greater subtilty: but such is the reason that I find, and that liketh me best.

After this most gracious creature had gone out from among us, the whole city came to be as it were widowed and despoiled of all dignity. Then I, left mourning in this desolate city, wrote unto the principal persons thereof, in an epistle, concerning its condition; taking for my commencement those words of Jeremias: *Quomodo sedet sola civitas!* etc. And I make mention of this, that none may marvel wherefore I set down these words before, in beginning to treat of her death. Also if any should blame me, in that I do not transcribe that epistle whereof I have spoken, I will make it mine excuse that I began this little book with the intent that it should be written altogether in the vulgar tongue; wherefore, seeing that the epistle I speak of is in Latin, it belongeth not to mine undertaking: more especially as I know that my chief friend, for whom I write this book, wished also that the whole of it should be in the vulgar tongue.

When mine eyes had wept for some while, until they were so weary with weeping that I could no longer through them give ease to my sorrow, I bethought me that a few mournful words might stand me instead of tears. And therefore I proposed to make a poem, that weeping I might speak therein of her for whom so much sorrow had destroyed my spirit; and I then began "The eyes that weep."

That this poem may seem to remain the more widowed at its close, I will divide it before writing it; and this method I will observe hence-

* Beatrice Portinari will thus be found to have died during the first hour of the 9th of June, 1290. And from what Dante says at the commencement of this work, (viz. that she was younger than himself by eight or nine months,) it may also be gathered that her age, at the time of her death, was twenty-four years and three months. The "perfect number" mentioned in the present passage is the number ten.

forward. I say that this poor little poem has three parts. The first is a prelude. In the second, I speak of her. In the third, I speak pitifully to the poem. The second begins here, "Beatrice is gone up"; the third here, "Weep, pitiful Song of mine." The first divides into three. In the first, I say what moves me to speak. In the second, I say to whom I mean to speak. In the third, I say of whom I mean to speak. The second begins here, "And because often, thinking"; the third here, "And I will say." Then, when I say, "Beatrice is gone up," I speak of her; and concerning this I have two parts. First, I tell the cause why she was taken away from us: afterwards, I say how one weeps her parting; and this part commences here, "Wonderfully." This part divides into three. In the first, I say who it is that weeps her not. In the second, I say who it is that doth weep her. In the third, I speak of my condition. The second begins here, "But sighing comes, and grief"; the third, "With sighs." Then, when I say, "Weep, pitiful Song of mine," I speak to this my song, telling it what ladies to go to, and stay with.

THE eyes that weep for pity of the heart
 Have wept so long that their grief languisheth,
 And they have no more tears to weep withal:
 And now, if I would ease me of a part
 Of what, little by little, leads to death,
 It must be done by speech, or not at all.
 And because often, thinking, I recall
 How it was pleasant, ere she went afar,
 To talk of her with you, kind damozels,
 I talk with no one else,
 But only with such hearts as women's are.
 And I will say,—still sobbing as speech fails,—
 That she hath gone to Heaven suddenly,
 And hath left Love below, to mourn with me.

Beatrice is gone up into high Heaven,
 The kingdom where the angels are at peace;
 And lives with them: and to her friends is dead.
 Not by the frost of winter was she driven
 Away, like others; nor by summer-heats;
 But through a perfect gentleness, instead.
 For from the lamp of her meek lowlihead
 Such an exceeding glory went up thence
 That it woke wonder in the Eternal Sire,
 Until a sweet desire
 Entered Him for that lovely excellence,
 So that He bade her to Himself aspire;
 Counting this weary and most evil place
 Unworthy of a thing so full of grace.

Wonderfully out of the beautiful form
 Soared her clear spirit, waxing glad the while;
 And is in its first home, there where it is.
 Who speaks thereof, and feels not the tears warm
 Upon his face, must have become so vile
 As to be dead to all sweet sympathies.
 Out upon him! an abject wretch like this

May not imagine anything of her,—
 He needs no bitter tears for his relief.
 But sighing comes, and grief,
 And the desire to find no comforter,
 (Save only Death, who makes all sorrow brief,)
 To him who for a while turns in his thought
 How she hath been among us, and is not.

With sighs my bosom always laboureth
 In thinking, as I do continually,
 Of her for whom my heart now breaks apace ;
 And very often when I think of death,
 Such a great inward longing comes to me
 That it will change the colour of my face ;
 And, if the idea settles in its place,
 All my limbs shake as with an ague-fit :
 Till, starting up in wild bewilderment,
 I do become so shent
 That I go forth, lest folk misdoubt of it.
 Afterward, calling with a sore lament
 On Beatrice, I ask, "Canst thou be dead ?"
 And calling on her, I am comforted.

Grief with its tears, and anguish with its sighs,
 Come to me now whene'er I am alone ;
 So that I think the sight of me gives pain.
 And what my life hath been, that living dies,
 Since for my lady the New Birth's begun,
 I have not any language to explain.
 And so, dear ladies, though my heart were fain,
 I scarce could tell indeed how I am thus.
 All joy is with my bitter life at war ;
 Yea, I am fallen so far
 That all men seem to say, "Go out from us,"
 Eyeing my cold white lips, how dead they are.
 But she, though I be bowed unto the dust,
 Watches me ; and will guerdon me, I trust.

Weep, pitiful Song of mine, upon thy way,
 To the dames going and the damozels
 For whom and for none else
 Thy sisters have made music many a day.
 Thou, that art very sad and not as they,
 Go dwell thou with them as a mourner dwells.

After I had written this poem, I received the visit of a friend whom I counted as second unto me in the degrees of friendship, and who, moreover, had been united by the nearest kindred to that most gracious creature. And when we had a little spoken together, he began to solicit me that I would write somewhat in memory of a lady who had died ; and he disguised his speech, so as to seem to be speaking of another who was but lately dead : wherefore I, perceiving that his speech was of none other than that blessed one herself, told him that it should be done as he required. Then afterwards, having thought thereof, I imagined to give vent in a sonnet to some part of my hidden lamentations ; but in such sort that it might seem to be spoken by this friend of mine, to whom I was to give it. And the sonnet saith thus : "Stay now with me," etc.

This sonnet has two parts. In the first, I call the Faithful of Love to hear me. In the second, I relate my miserable condition. The second begins here, "Mark how they force."

STAY now with me, and listen to my sighs,
 Ye piteous hearts, as pity bids ye do.
 Mark how they force their way out and press through;
 If they be once pent up, the whole life dies.
 Seeing that now indeed my weary eyes
 Oftener refuse than I can tell to you
 (Even though my endless grief is ever new,)
 To weep and let the smothered anguish rise.
 Also in sighing ye shall hear me call
 On her whose blessed presence doth enrich
 The only home that well befitteth her:
 And ye shall hear a bitter scorn of all
 Sent from the inmost of my spirit in speech
 That mourns its joy and its joy's minister.

But when I had written this sonnet, bethinking me who he was to whom I was to give it, that it might appear to be his speech, it seemed to me that this was but a poor and barren gift for one of her so near kindred. Wherefore, before giving him this sonnet, I wrote two stanzas of a poem: the first being written in very sooth as though it were spoken by him, but the other being mine own speech, albeit, unto one who should not look closely, they would both seem to be said by the same person. Nevertheless, looking closely, one must perceive that it is not so, inasmuch as one does not call this most gracious creature *his lady*, and the other does, as is manifestly apparent. And I gave the poem and the sonnet unto my friend, saying that I had made them only for him.

The poem begins, "Whatever while," and has two parts. In the first, that is, in the first stanza, this my dear friend, her kinsman, laments. In the second, I lament; that is, in the other stanza, which begins, "For ever." And thus it appears that in this poem two persons lament, of whom one laments as a brother, the other as a servant.

WHATEVER while the thought comes over me
 That I may not again
 Behold that lady whom I mourn for now,
 About my heart my mind brings constantly
 So much of extreme pain
 That I say, Soul of mine, why stayest thou?
 Truly the anguish, Soul, that we must bow
 Beneath, until we win out of this life,
 Gives me full oft a fear that trembleth:
 So that I call on Death
 Even as on Sleep one calleth after strife,
 Saying, Come unto me. Life showeth grim
 And bare; and if one dies, I envy him.

For ever, among all my sighs which burn,
 There is a piteous speech
 That clamours upon death continually:
 Yea, unto him doth my whole spirit turn
 Since first his hand did reach
 My lady's life with most foul cruelty.
 But from the height of woman's fairness, she,

Going up from us with the joy we had,
 Grew perfectly and spiritually fair;
 That so she spreads even there
 A light of Love which makes the Angels glad,
 And even unto their subtle minds can bring
 A certain awe of profound marvelling.

On that day which fulfilled the year since my lady had been made of the citizens of eternal life, remembering me of her as I sat alone, I betook myself to draw the resemblance of an angel upon certain tablets. And while I did thus, chancing to turn my head, I perceived that some were standing beside me to whom I should have given courteous welcome, and that they were observing what I did: also I learned afterwards that they had been there a while before I perceived them. Perceiving whom, I arose for salutation, and said: "Another was with me." *

Afterwards, when they had left me, I set myself again to mine occupation, to wit, to the drawing figures of angels: in doing which, I conceived to write of this matter in rhyme, as for her anniversary, and to address my rhymes unto those who had just left me. It was then that I wrote the sonnet which saith, "That lady": and as this sonnet hath two commencements, it behoveth me to divide it with both of them here.

I say that, according to the first, this sonnet has three parts. In the first, I say that this lady was then in my memory. In the second, I tell what Love therefore did with me. In the third, I speak of the effects of Love. The second begins here, "Love knowing"; the third here, "Forth went they." This part divides into two. In the one, I say that all my sighs issued speaking. In the other, I say how some spoke certain words different from the others. The second begins here, "And still." In this same manner is it divided with the other beginning, save that, in the first part, I tell when this lady had thus come into my mind, and this I say not in the other.

THAT lady of all gentle memories
 Had lighted on my soul;—whose new abode
 Lies now, as it was well ordained of God,
 Among the poor in heart, where Mary is.
 Love, knowing that dear image to be his,
 Woke up within the sick heart sorrow-bow'd,
 Unto the sighs which are its weary load
 Saying, "Go forth." And they went forth, I wis;
 Forth went they from my breast that throbb'd and ached;
 With such a pang as oftentimes will bathe
 Mine eyes with tears when I am left alone.
 And still those sighs which drew the heaviest breath
 Came whispering thus: "O noble intellect!
 It is a year to-day that thou art gone."

SECOND COMMENCEMENT

THAT lady of all gentle memories
 Had lighted on my soul;—for whose sake flow'd
 The tears of Love; in whom the power abode
 Which led you to observe while I did this.
 Love, knowing that dear image to be his, etc.

* Thus according to some texts. The majority, however, add the words, "And therefore was I in thought:" but the shorter speech is perhaps the more forcible and pathetic.

Then, having sat for some space sorely in thought because of the time that was now past, I was so filled with dolorous imaginings that it became outwardly manifest in mine altered countenance. Whereupon, feeling this and being in dread lest any should have seen me, I lifted mine eyes to look; and then perceived a young and very beautiful lady, who was gazing upon me from a window with a gaze full of pity, so that the very sum of pity appeared gathered together in her. And seeing that unhappy persons, when they beget compassion in others, are then most moved unto weeping, as though they also felt pity for themselves, it came to pass that mine eyes began to be inclined unto tears. Wherefore, becoming fearful lest I should make manifest mine abject condition, I rose up, and went where I could not be seen of that lady; saying afterwards within myself: "Certainly with her also must abide most noble Love." And with that, I resolved upon writing a sonnet, wherein, speaking unto her, I should say all that I have just said. And as this sonnet is very evident, I will not divide it:—

MINE eyes beheld the blessed pity spring
 Into thy countenance immediately
 A while ago, when thou beheldst in me
 The sickness only hidden grief can bring;
 And then I knew thou wast considering
 How abject and forlorn my life must be;
 And I became afraid that thou shouldst see
 My weeping, and account it a base thing.
 Therefore I went out from thee; feeling how
 The tears were straightway loosened at my heart
 Beneath thine eyes' compassionate control;
 And afterwards I said within my soul:
 "Lo! with this lady dwells the counterpart
 Of the same Love who holds me weeping now."

It happened after this that whensoever I was seen of this lady, she became pale and of a piteous countenance, as though it had been with love; whereby she remembered me many times of my own most noble lady, who was wont to be of a like paleness. And I know that often, when I could not weep nor in any way give ease unto mine anguish, I went to look upon this lady, who seemed to bring the tears into my eyes by the mere sight of her. Of the which thing I bethought me to speak unto her in rhyme, and then made this sonnet: which begins, "Love's pallor," and which is plain without being divided, by its exposition aforesaid:—

Love's pallor and the semblance of deep ruth
 Were never yet shown forth so perfectly
 In any lady's face, chancing to see
 Grief's miserable countenance uncouth,
 As in thine, lady, they have sprung to soothe,
 When in mine anguish thou hast looked on me;
 Until sometimes it seems as if, through thee,
 My heart might almost wander from its truth.
 Yet so it is, I cannot hold mine eyes
 From gazing very often upon thine
 In the sore hope to shed those tears they keep;
 And at such time, thou mak'st the pent tears rise
 Even to the brim, till the eyes waste and pine;
 Yet cannot they, while thou art present, weep.

At length, by the constant sight of this lady, mine eyes began to be gladdened overmuch with her company; through which thing many times I had much unrest, and rebuked myself as a base person: also, many times I cursed the unsteadfastness of mine eyes, and said to them inwardly: "Was not your grievous condition of weeping wont one while to make others weep? And will ye now forget this thing because a lady looketh upon you? who so looketh merely in compassion of the grief ye then showed for your own blessed lady. But whatso ye can, that do ye, accursed eyes! many a time will I make you remember it! for never, till death dry you up, should ye make an end of your weeping." And when I had spoken thus unto mine eyes, I was taken again with extreme and grievous sighing. And to the end that this inward strife which I had undergone might not be hidden from all saving the miserable wretch who endured it, I proposed to write a sonnet, and to comprehend in it this horrible condition. And I wrote this which begins, "The very bitter weeping."

The sonnet has two parts. In the first, I speak to my eyes, as my heart spoke within myself. In the second, I remove a difficulty, showing who it is that speaks thus: and this part begins here, "So far." It well might receive other divisions also; but this would be useless, since it is manifest by the preceding exposition.

"THE very bitter weeping that ye made
 So long a time together, eyes of mine,
 Was wont to make the tears of pity shine
 In other eyes full oft, as I have said.
 But now this thing were scarce remembered
 If I, on my part, foully would combine
 With you, and not recall each ancient sign
 Of grief, and her for whom your tears were shed.
 It is your fickleness that doth betray
 My mind to fears, and makes me tremble thus
 What while a lady greets me with her eyes.
 Except by death, we must not any way
 Forget our lady who is gone from us."
 So far doth my heart utter, and then sighs.

The sight of this lady brought me into so unwonted a condition that I often thought of her as of one too dear unto me; and I began to consider her thus: "This lady is young, beautiful, gentle, and wise: perchance it was Love himself who set her in my path, that so my life might find peace." And there were times when I thought yet more fondly, until my heart consented unto its reasoning. But when it had so consented, my thought would often turn round upon me, as moved by reason, and cause me to say within myself: "What hope is this which would console me after so base a fashion, and which hath taken the place of all other imagining?" Also there was another voice within me, that said: "And wilt thou, having suffered so much tribulation through Love, not escape while yet thou mayst from so much bitterness? Thou must surely know that this thought carries with it the desire of Love, and drew its life from the gentle eyes of that lady who vouchsafed thee so much pity." Wherefore I, having striven sorely and very often with myself, bethought me to say somewhat thereof in rhyme. And seeing that in the battle of doubts, the victory most often remained with such as inclined towards the lady of whom I speak, it seemed to me that I should address this sonnet unto her: in the first line whereof, I call that thought which

spake of her a gentle thought, only because it spoke of one who was gentle ; being of itself most vile.*

In this sonnet I make myself into two, according as my thoughts were divided one from the other. The one part I call Heart, that is, appetite ; the other, Soul, that is, reason ; and I tell what one saith to the other. And that it is fitting to call the appetite Heart, and the reason Soul, is manifest enough to them to whom I wish this to be open. True it is that, in the preceding sonnet, I take the part of the Heart against the Eyes ; and that appears contrary to what I say in the present ; and therefore I say that, there also, by the Heart I mean appetite, because yet greater was my desire to remember my most gentle lady than to see this other, although indeed I had some appetite towards her, but it appeared slight : wherefrom it appears that the one statement is not contrary to the other. This sonnet has three parts. In the first, I begin to say to this lady how my desires turn all towards her. In the second, I say how the Soul, that is the reason, speaks to the Heart, that is, to the appetite. In the third, I say how the latter answers. The second begins here, " And what is this ? " the third here, " And the heart answers."

A GENTLE thought there is will often start,
 Within my secret self, to speech of thee :
 Also of Love it speaks so tenderly
 That much in me consents and takes its part.
 " And what is this," the soul saith to the heart,
 " That cometh thus to comfort thee and me,
 And thence where it would dwell, thus potently
 Can drive all other thoughts by its strange art ? "
 And the heart answers : " Be no more at strife
 'Twixt doubt and doubt : this is Love's messenger
 And speaketh but his words, from him received ;
 And all the strength it owns and all the life
 It draweth from the gentle eyes of her
 Who, looking on our grief, hath often grieved."

But against this adversary of reason, there rose up in me on a certain day, about the ninth hour, a strong visible phantasy, wherein I seemed to behold the most gracious Beatrice, habited in that crimson raiment which she had worn when I had first beheld her ; also she appeared to me of the same tender age as then. Whereupon I fell into a deep thought of her : and my memory ran back, according to the order of time, unto all those matters in the which she had borne a part ; and my heart began painfully to repent of the desire by which it had so basely let itself be possessed during so many days, contrary to the constancy of reason.

And then, this evil desire being quite gone from me, all my thoughts turned again unto their excellent Beatrice. And I say most truly that from that hour I thought constantly of her with the whole humbled and ashamed heart ; the which became often manifest in sighs, that had among them the name of that most gracious creature, and how she departed from us. Also it would come to pass very often, through the bitter anguish of some one thought, that I forgot both it, and myself, and where I was. By this increase of sighs, my weeping, which before had been somewhat lessened, increased in like manner ; so that mine eyes seemed to long only for tears and to cherish them, and came at last to be circled about with red as though they had suffered

* Boccaccio tells us that Dante was married to Gemma Donati about a year after the death of Beatrice. Can Gemma then be " the lady of the window," his love for whom Dante so contemns ? Such a passing conjecture (when considered together with the interpretation of this passage in Dante's later work, the *Convivio*) would of course imply an admission of what I believe to lie at the heart of all true Dantesque commentary ; that is, the existence always of the actual events even where the allegorical superstructure has been raised by Dante himself.

martyrdom: neither were they able to look again upon the beauty of any face that might again bring them to shame and evil: from which things it will appear that they were fitly guerdoned for their unsteadfastness. Wherefore I (wishing that mine abandonment of all such evil desires and vain temptations should be certified and made manifest, beyond all doubts which might have been suggested by the rhymes aforewritten) proposed to write a sonnet wherein I should express this purport. And I then wrote, "Woe's me!"

I said, "Woe's me!" because I was ashamed of the trifling of mine eyes. This sonnet I do not divide, since its purport is manifest enough.

WOE's me! by dint of all these sighs that come
 Forth of my heart, its endless grief to prove,
 Mine eyes are conquered, so that even to move
 Their lids for greeting is grown troublesome,
 They wept so long that now they are grief's home,
 And count their tears all laughter far above;
 They wept till they are circled now by Love
 With a red circle in sign of martyrdom.
 These musings, and the sighs they bring from me,
 Are grown at last so constant and so sore
 That love swoons in my spirit with faint breath;
 Hearing in those sad sounds continually
 The most sweet name that my dead lady bore,
 With many grievous words touching her death.

About this time, it happened that a great number of persons undertook a pilgrimage, to the end that they might behold that blessed portraiture bequeathed unto us by our Lord Jesus Christ as the image of His beautiful countenance * (upon which countenance my dear lady now looketh continually). And certain among these pilgrims, who seemed very thoughtful, passed by a path which is well-nigh in the midst of the city where my most gracious lady was born, and abode, and at last died.

Then I, beholding them, said within myself: "These pilgrims seem to be come from very far; and I think they cannot have heard speak of this lady, or know anything concerning her. Their thoughts are not of her, but of other things; it may be, of their friends who are far distant, and whom we, in our turn, know not." And I went on to say: "I know that if they were of a country near unto us, they would in some wise seem disturbed, passing through this city which is so full of grief." And I said also: "If I could speak with them a space, I am certain that I should make them weep before they went forth of this city; for those things that they would hear from me must needs beget weeping in any."

And when the last of them had gone by me, I bethought me to write a sonnet, showing forth mine inward speech; and that it might seem the more pitiful, I made as though I had spoken it indeed unto them. And I wrote this sonnet, which beginneth: "Ye pilgrim-

* The Veronica (*Vera icon*, or true image); that is, the napkin with which a woman was said to have wiped our Saviour's face on His way to the cross, and which miraculously retained its likeness. Dante makes mention of it also in the *Commedia* (Parad. xxi.103), where he says:—

"Qual è colui che forse di Croazia
 Viene a veder la Veronica nostra
 Che per l'antica fama non si sazia
 Ma dice nel pensier fin che si mostra:
 Signor mio Gesù Cristo, Iddio verace,
 Or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra?" etc.

folk." I made use of the word *pilgrim* for its general signification ; for "pilgrim" may be understood in two senses, one general, and one special. General, so far as any man may be called a pilgrim who leaveth the place of his birth ; whereas, more narrowly speaking, he only is a pilgrim who goeth towards or frowards the House of St. James. For there are three separate denominations proper unto those who undertake journeys to the glory of God. They are called Palmers who go beyond the seas eastward, whence often they bring palm-branches. And Pilgrims, as I have said, are they who journey unto the holy House of Gallicia ; seeing that no other apostle was buried so far from his birth-place as was the blessed Saint James. And there is a third sort who are called Romers ; in that they go whither those whom I have called pilgrims went : which is to say, unto Rome.

This sonnet is not divided, because its own words sufficiently declare it.

YE pilgrim-folk, advancing pensively
 As in thought of distant things, I pray,
 Is your own land indeed so far away—
 As by your aspect it would seem to be—
 That this our heavy sorrow leaves you free
 Though passing through the mournful town mid-way ;
 Like unto men that understand to-day
 Nothing at all of her great misery ?
 Yet if ye will but stay, whom I accost,
 And listen to my words a little space,
 At going ye shall mourn with a loud voice.
 It is her Beatrice that she hath lost ;
 Of whom the least word spoken holds such grace
 That men weep hearing it, and have no choice.

A while after these things, two gentle ladies sent unto me, praying that I would bestow upon them certain of these my rhymes. And I (taking into account their worthiness and consideration), resolved that I would write also a new thing, and send it them together with those others, to the end that their wishes might be more honourably fulfilled. Therefore I made a sonnet, which narrates my condition, and which I caused to be conveyed to them, accompanied by the one preceding, and with that other which begins, "Stay now with me and listen to my sighs." And the new sonnet is, "Beyond the sphere."

This sonnet comprises five parts. In the first, I tell whither my thought goeth, naming the place by the name of one of its effects. In the second, I say wherefore it goeth up, and who makes it go thus. In the third, I tell what it saw, namely, a lady honoured. And I then call it a "Pilgrim Spirit," because it goes up spiritually, and like a pilgrim who is out of his known country. In the fourth, I say how the spirit sees her such (that is, in such quality) that I cannot understand her ; that is to say, my thought rises into the quality of her in a degree that my intellect cannot comprehend, seeing that our intellect is, towards those blessed souls, like our eye weak against the sun ; and this the Philosopher says in the Second of the Metaphysics. In the fifth, I say that, although I cannot see there whither my thought carries me—that is, to her admirable essence—I at least understand this, namely, that it is a thought of my lady, because I often hear her name therein. And, at the end of this fifth part, I say, "Ladies mine," to show that they are ladies to whom I speak. The second part begins, "A new perception" ; the third, "When it hath reached" ; the fourth, "It sees her such" ; the fifth, "And yet I know." It might be divided yet more nicely, and made yet clearer ; but this division may pass, and therefore I stay not to divide it further.

BEYOND the sphere which spreads to widest space
 Now soars the sigh that my heart sends above ;
 A new perception born of grieving Love
 Guideth it upward the untrodden ways.
 When it hath reached unto the end, and stays,
 It sees a lady round whom splendours move
 In homage ; till, by the great light thereof
 Abashed, the pilgrim spirit stands at gaze.
 It sees her such, that when it tells me this
 Which it hath seen, I understand it not,
 It hath a speech so subtile and so fine.
 And yet I know its voice within my thought
 Often remembereth me of Beatrice :
 So that I understand it, ladies mine.

After writing this sonnet, it was given unto me to behold a very wonderful vision : * wherein I saw things which determined me that I would say nothing further of this most blessed one, until such time as I could discourse more worthily concerning her. And to this end I labour all I can ; as she well knoweth. Wherefore if it be His pleasure through whom is the life of all things, that my life continue with me a few years, it is my hope that I shall yet write concerning her what hath not before been written of any woman. After the which, may it seem good unto Him who is the Master of Grace, that my spirit should go hence to behold the glory of its lady : to wit, of that blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His countenance *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus*. † *Laus Deo*.

* This we may believe to have been the Vision of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, which furnished the triple argument of the *Divina Commedia*. The Latin words ending the *Vita Nuova* are almost identical with those at the close of the letter in which Dante, on concluding the *Paradise*, and accomplishing the hope here expressed, dedicates his great work to Can Grande della Scala.

† "Who is blessed throughout all ages."

I
TO BRUNETTO LATINI

SONNET

Sent with the Vita Nuova

MASTER BRUNETTO, this my little maid
Is come to spend her Easter-tide with you;
Not that she reckons feasting as her due,—
Whose need is hardly to be fed, but read.
Not in a hurry can her sense be weighed,
Nor mid the jests of any noisy crew:
Ah! and she wants a little coaxing too
Before she'll get into another's head.
But if you do not find her meaning clear,
You've many Brother Alberts * hard at hand,
Whose wisdom will respond to any call,
Consult with them and do not laugh at her;
And if she still is hard to understand,
Apply to Master Janus last of all.

II
SONNET †

Of Beatrice de' Portinari, on All Saints' Day

LAST All Saints' holy-day, even now gone by,
I met a gathering of damozels:
She that came first, as one doth who excels,
Had Love with her, bearing her company:
A flame burned forward through her steadfast eye,
As when in living fire a spirit dwells:
So, gazing with the boldness which prevails
O'er doubt, I knew an angel visibly.
As she passed on, she bowed her mild approval
And salutation to all men of worth,
Lifting the soul to solemn thoughts aloof.
In Heaven itself that lady had her birth,
I think, and is with us for our behoof:
Blessed are they who meet her on the earth.

* Probably in allusion to Albert of Cologne. Giano (Janus), which follows, was in use as an Italian name, as for instance Giano della Bella; but it seems probable that Dante is merely playfully advising his preceptor to avail himself of the twofold insight of Janus the double-faced.

† This and the six following pieces (with the possible exception of the canzone at page 349) seem so certainly to have been written at the same time as the poetry of the *Vita Nuova*, that it becomes difficult to guess why they were omitted from that work. Other poems in Dante's *Canzoniere* refer in a more general manner to his love for Beatrice, but each among those I allude to bears the impress of some special occasion.

III

SONNET

*To certain Ladies ; when Beatrice was lamenting
her Father's Death **

WHENCE come you, all of you so sorrowful ?
 An it may please you, speak for courtesy.
 I fear for my dear lady's sake, lest she
 Have made you to return thus filled with dule.
 O gentle ladies, be not hard to school
 In gentleness, but to some pause agree,
 And something of my lady say to me,
 For with a little my desire is full.
 Howbeit it be a heavy thing to hear :
 For Love now utterly has thrust me forth,
 With hand for ever lifted, striking fear.
 See if I be not worn unto the earth ;
 Yea, and my spirit must fail from me here,
 If, when you speak, your words are of no worth.

IV

SONNET

To the same Ladies ; with their Answer

YE ladies, walking past me piteous-eyed,
 Who is the lady that lies prostrate here ?
 Can this be even she my heart holds dear ?
 Nay, if it be so, speak, and nothing hide.
 Her very aspect seems itself beside,
 And all her features of such altered cheer
 That to my thinking they do not appear
 Hers who makes others seem beatified.

" If thou forget to know our lady thus,
 Whom grief o'ercomes, we wonder in no wise,
 For also the same thing befalleth us.
 Yet if thou watch the movement of her eyes,
 Of her thou shalt be straightway conscious.
 O weep no more ; thou art all wan with sighs."

* See the *Vita Nuova*, at page 327.

V

BALLATA

He will gaze upon Beatrice

BECAUSE mine eyes can never have their fill
 Of looking at my lady's lovely face,
 I will so fix my gaze
 That I may become blessed, beholding her.

Even as an angel, up at his great height
 Standing amid the light,
 Becometh bless'd by only seeing God :—
 So, though I be a simple earthly wight,
 Yet none the less I might,
 Beholding her who is my heart's dear load,
 Be bless'd, and in the spirit soar abroad.
 Such power abideth in that gracious one ;
 Albeit felt of none
 Save of him who, desiring, honours her.

VI

CANZONE *

A Complaint of his Lady's scorn

LOVE, since it is thy will that I return
 'Neath her usurped control
 Who is thou know'st how beautiful and proud ;
 Enlighten thou her heart, so bidding burn
 Thy flame within her soul
 That she rejoice not when my cry is loud.
 Be thou but once endowed
 With sense of the new peace, and of this fire,
 And of the scorn wherewith I am despised,
 And wherefore death is my most fierce desire ;
 And then thou'lt be apprised
 Of all. So if thou slay me afterward,
 Anguish unburthened shall make death less hard.

O Lord, thou knowest very certainly
 That thou didst make me apt
 To serve thee. But I was not wounded yet,
 When under heaven I beheld openly
 The face which thus hath rapt
 My soul. Then all my spirits ran elate
 Upon her will to wait.
 And she, the peerless one who o'er all worth
 Is still her proper beauty's worshipper,
 Made semblance then to guide them safely forth :
 And they put faith in her :
 Till, gathering them within her garment all,
 She turned their blessed peace to tears and gall.

* This poem seems probably referable to the time during which Beatrice denied her salutation to Dante. (See the *Vita Nuova*, at page 317 *et seq.*)

Then I (for I could hear how they complained,)
 As sympathy impelled,
 Full off to seek her presence did arise.
 And mine own soul (which better had refrained)
 So much my strength upheld
 That I could steadily behold her eyes.
 This in thy knowledge lies,
 Who then didst call me with so mild a face
 That I hoped solace from my greater load :
 And when she turned the key on my dark place,
 Such ruth thy grace bestowed
 Upon my grief, and in such piteous kind,
 That I had strength to bear, and was resign'd.

For love of the sweet favour's comforting
 Did I become her thrall ;
 And still her every movement gladdened me
 With triumph that I served so sweet a thing :
 Pleasures and blessings all
 I set aside, my perfect hope to see :
 Till her proud contumely—
 That so mine aim might rest unsatisfied—
 Covered the beauty of her countenance.
 So straightway fell into my living side,
 To slay me, the swift lance :
 While she rejoiced and watched my bitter end,
 Only to prove what succour thou wouldst send.

I therefore, weary with my love's constraint,
 To death's deliverance ran,
 That out of terrible grief I might be brought :
 For tears had broken me and left me faint
 Beyond the lot of man,
 Until each sigh must be my last, I thought.
 Yet still this longing wrought
 So much of torment for my soul to bear,
 That with the pang I swooned and fell to earth.
 Then, as in trance, 'twas whispered at mine ear,
 How in this constant girth
 Of anguish, I indeed at length must die :
 So that I dreaded Love continually.

Master, thou knowest now
 The life which in thy service I have borne :
 Not that I tell it thee to disallow
 Control, who still to thy behest am sworn.
 Yet if through this my vow
 I remain dead, nor help they will confer,
 Do thou at least, for God's sake, pardon her.

VII

CANZONE

He beseeches Death for the Life of Beatrice

DEATH, since I find not one with whom to grieve,
 Nor whom this grief of mine may move to tears,
 Whereso I be or whitherso I turn :
 Since it is thou who in my soul wilt leave
 No single joy, but chill'st it with just fears
 And makest it in fruitless hopes to burn :
 Since thou, Death, and thou only, canst discern
 Wealth to my life, or want, at thy free choice :—
 It is to thee that I lift up my voice,
 Bowing my face that's like a face just dead.
 I come to thee, as to one pitying,
 In grief for that sweet rest which nought can bring
 Again, if thou but once be entered
 Into her life whom my heart cherishes
 Even as the only portal of its peace.

Death, how most sweet the peace is that thy grace
 Can grant to me, and that I pray thee for,
 Thou easily mayst know by a sure sign,
 If in mine eyes thou look a little space
 And read in them the hidden dread they store,—
 If upon all thou look which proves me thine.
 Since the fear only maketh me to pine
 After this sort,—what will mine anguish be
 When her eyes close, of dreadful verity,
 In whose light is the light of mine own eyes ?
 But now I know that thou wouldst have my life
 As hers, and joy'st thee in my fruitless strife.
 Yet I do think this which I feel implies
 That soon, when I would die to flee from pain,
 I shall find none by whom I may be slain.

Death, if indeed thou smite this gentle one
 Whose outward worth but tells the intellect
 How wondrous is the miracle within,—
 Thou biddest Virtue rise up and begone,
 Thou dost away with Mercy's best effect,
 Thou spoil'st the mansion of God's sojourning.
 Yea, unto nought her beauty thou dost bring
 Which is above all other beauties, even
 In so much as befitteth one whom Heaven
 Sent upon earth in token of its own.
 Thou dost break through the perfect trust which hath
 Been alway her companion in Love's path :
 The light once darkened which was hers alone,
 Love needs must say to them he ruleth o'er,
 "I have lost the noble banner that I bore."

Death, have some pity then for all the ill
 Which cannot choose but happen if she die,
 And which will be the sorest ever known.
 Slacken the string, if so it be thy will,
 That the sharp arrow leave it not,—thereby
 Sparing her life, which if it flies is flown.
 O Death, for God's sake, be some pity shown !
 Restrain within thyself, even at its height,
 The cruel wrath which moveth thee to smite
 Her in whom God hath set so much of grace.
 Show now some ruth if 'tis a thing thou hast !
 I seem to see Heaven's gate, that is shut fast,
 Open, and angels filling all the space
 About me,—come to fetch her soul whose laud
 Is sung by saints and angels before God.

Song, thou must surely see how fine a thread
 This is that my last hope is holden by,
 And what I should be brought to without her.
 Therefore for thy plain speech and lowlihead
 Make thou no pause : but go immediately,
 (Knowing thyself for my heart's minister,)
 And with that very meek and piteous air
 Thou hast, stand up before the face of Death,
 To wrench away the bar that prisoneth
 And win unto the place of the good fruit.
 And if indeed thou shake by thy soft voice
 Death's mortal purpose,—haste thee and rejoice
 Our lady with the issue of thy suit.
 So yet awhile our earthly nights and days
 Shall keep the blessed spirit that I praise.

VIII

SONNET

On the 9th of June 1290

UPON a day, came Sorrow in to me,
 Saying, "I've come to stay with thee a while ;"
 And I perceived that she had ushered Bile
 And Pain into my house for company.
 Wherefore I said, "Go forth—away with thee !"
 But like a Greek she answered, full of guile,
 And went on arguing in an easy style.
 Then, looking, I saw Love come silently,
 Habited in black raiment, smooth and new,
 Having a black hat set upon his hair ;
 And certainly the tears he shed were true.
 So that I asked, "What ails thee, trifler ?"
 Answering he said : "A grief to be gone through ;
 For our own lady's dying, brother dear."

IX

TO CINO DA PISTOIA

SONNET

He rebukes Cino for Fickleness

I THOUGHT to be for ever separate,
 Fair Master Cino, from these rhymes of yours ;
 Since further from the coast, another course,
 My vessel now must journey with her freight.*
 Yet still, because I hear men name your state
 As his whom every lure doth straight beguile,
 I pray you lend a very little while
 Unto my voice your ear grown obdurate.
 The man after this measure amorous,
 Who still at his own will is bound and loosed,
 How slightly Love him wounds is lightly known.
 If on this wise your heart in homage bows,
 I pray you for God's sake it be disused,
 So that the deed and the sweet words be one.

CINO DA PISTOIA TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

He answers Dante, confessing his unsteadfast heart

DANTE, since I from my own native place
 In heavy exile have turned wanderer,
 Far distant from the purest joy which e'er
 Had issued from the Fount of joy and grace,
 I have gone weeping through the world's dull space,
 And me proud Death, as one too mean, doth spare ;
 Yet meeting Love, Death's neighbour, I declare
 That still his arrows hold my heart in chase.
 Nor from his pitiless aim can I get free,
 Nor from the hope which comforts my weak will,
 Though no true aid exists which I could share.
 One pleasure ever binds and looses me ;
 That so, by one same Beauty lured, I still
 Delight in many women here and there.

* This might seem to suggest that the present sonnet was written about the same time as the close of the *Vita Nuova*, and that an allusion may also here be intended to the first conception of Dante's great work.

X

TO CINO DA PISTOIA

SONNET

Written in Exile

BECAUSE I find not whom to speak withal
 Anent that lord whose I am as thou art,
 Behoves that in thine ear I tell some part
 Of this whereof I gladly would say all.
 And deem thou nothing else occasional
 Of my long silence while I kept apart,
 Except this place, so guilty at the heart
 That the right has not who will give it stall.
 Love comes not here to any woman's face,
 Nor any man here for his sake will sigh,
 For unto such, "Thou fool!" were straightway said.
 Ah! Master Cino, how the time turns base,
 And mocks at us, and on our rhymes says "Fie!"
 Since truth has been thus thinly harvested.

CINO DA PISTOIA TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

He answers the foregoing Sonnet, and prays Dante, in the name of Beatrice, to continue his great Poem

I KNOW not, Dante, in what refuge dwells
 The truth, which with all men is out of mind;
 For long ago it left this place behind,
 Till in its stead at last God's thunder swells.
 Yet if our shifting life most clearly tells
 That here the truth has no reward assign'd,—
 'Twas God, remember, taught it to mankind,
 And even among the fiends preached nothing else.
 Then, though the kingdoms of the earth be torn,
 Where'er thou set thy feet, from Truth's control,
 Yet unto me thy friend this prayer accord:—
 Beloved, O my brother, sorrow-worn,
 Even in that lady's name who is thy goal,
 Sing on till thou redeem thy plighted word!*

* That is, the pledge given at the end of the *Vita Nuova*. This may perhaps have been written in the early days of Dante's exile, before his resumption of the interrupted *Commedia*.

XI

SONNET

Of Beauty and Duty

Two ladies to the summit of my mind
 Have clomb, to hold an argument of love.
 The one has wisdom with her from above,
 For every noblest virtue well designed :
 The other, beauty's tempting power refined
 And the high charm of perfect grace approve :
 And I, as my sweet Master's will doth move,
 At feet of both their favours am reclined.
 Beauty and Duty in my soul keep strife,
 At question if the heart such course can take
 And 'twixt two ladies hold its love complete.
 The fount of gentle speech yields answer meet,
 That Beauty may be loved for gladness' sake,
 And Duty in the lofty ends of life.

XII

SESTINA *

Of the Lady Pietra degli Scrovigni

To the dim light and the large circle of shade
 I have clomb, and to the whitening of the hills,
 There where we see no colour in the grass.
 Nathless my longing loses not its green,
 It has so taken root in the hard stone
 Which talks and hears as though it were a lady.

Utterly frozen is this youthful lady,
 Even as the snow that lies within the shade ;
 For she is no more moved than is the stone
 By the sweet season which makes warm the hills
 And alters them afresh from white to green,
 Covering their sides again with flowers and grass.

When on her hair she sets a crown of grass
 The thought has no more room for other lady ;
 Because she weaves the yellow with the green
 So well that Love sits down there in the shade,—
 Love who has shut me in among low hills
 Faster than between walls of granite-stone.

She is more bright than is a precious stone ;
 The wound she gives may not be healed with grass :
 I therefore have fled far o'er plains and hills
 For refuge from so dangerous a lady ;
 But from her sunshine nothing can give shade,—
 Not any hill, nor wall, nor summer-green.

* I have translated this piece both on account of its great and peculiar beauty, and also because it affords an example of a form of composition which I have met with in no Italian writer before Dante's time, though it is not uncommon among the Provençal poets (see Dante, *De Vulg. Elog.*). I have headed it with the name of a Paduan lady, to whom it is surmised by some to have been addressed during Dante's exile ; but this must be looked upon as a rather doubtful conjecture, and I have adopted the name chiefly to mark it at once as not referring to Beatrice.

A while ago, I saw her dressed in green,—
 So fair, she might have wakened in a stone
 This love which I do feel even for her shade;
 And therefore, as one woos a graceful lady,
 I wooed her in a field that was all grass
 Girdled about with very lofty hills.

Yet shall the streams turn back and climb the hills
 Before Love's flame in this damp wood and green
 Burn, as it burns within a youthful lady,
 For my sake, who would sleep away in stone
 My life, or feed like beasts upon the grass,
 Only to see her garments cast a shade.

How dark soe'er the hills throw out their shade,
 Under her summer-green the beautiful lady
 Covers it, like a stone covered in grass.

XIII

SONNET *

A Curse for a fruitless Love

My curse be on the day when first I saw
 The brightness in those treacherous eyes of thine,—
 The hour when from my heart thou cam'st to draw
 My soul away, that both might fail and pine:
 My curse be on the skill that smooth'd each line
 Of my vain songs,—the music and just law
 Of art, by which it was my dear design
 That the whole world should yield thee love and awe.
 Yea, let me curse mine own obduracy,
 Which firmly holds what doth itself confound—
 To wit, thy fair perverted face of scorn:
 For whose sake Love is oftentimes forsworn
 So that men mock at him: but most at me
 Who would hold fortune's wheel and turn it round.

* I have separated this sonnet from the pieces bearing on the *Vita Nuova*, as it is naturally repugnant to connect it with Beatrice. I cannot, however, but think it possible that it may have been the bitter fruit of some bitterest moment in those hours when Dante endured her scorn.

GUIDO CAVALCANTI

I

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*He interprets Dante's Dream, related in the first Sonnet of the Vita Nuova **

UNTO my thinking, thou beheld'st all worth,
All joy, as much of good as man may know,
If thou wert in his power who here below
Is honour's righteous lord throughout this earth.
Where evil dies, even there he has his birth,
Whose justice out of pity's self doth grow.
Softly to sleeping persons he will go,
And, with no pain to them, their hearts draw forth.
Thy heart he took, as knowing well, alas!
That Death had claimed thy lady for a prey:
In fear whereof, he fed her with thy heart.
But when he seemed in sorrow to depart,
Sweet was thy dream; for by that sign, I say,
Surely the opposite shall come to pass.†

II

SONNET

To his Lady Joan, of Florence

FLOWERS hast thou in thyself, and foliage,
And what is good, and what is glad to see;
The sun is not so bright as thy visage;
All is stark naught when one hath looked on thee;
There is not such a beautiful personage
Anywhere on the green earth verily;
If one fear love, thy bearing sweet and sage
Comforteth him, and no more fear hath he.
Thy lady friends and maidens ministering
Are all, for love of thee, much to my taste:
And much I pray them that in everything
They honour thee even as thou meritest,
And have thee in their gentle harbouring:
Because among them all thou art the best.

* See the *Vita Nuova*, at page 312.

† This may refer to the belief that, towards morning, dreams go by contraries:

III

SONNET

He compares all Things with his Lady, and finds them wanting

BEAUTY in woman ; the high will's decree ;
 Fair knighthood armed for manly exercise ;
 The pleasant song of birds ; love's soft replies ;
 The strength of rapid ships upon the sea ;
 The serene air when light begins to be ;
 The white snow, without wind that falls and lies ;
 Fields of all flower ; the place where waters rise ;
 Silver and gold ; azure in jewellery :—
 Weighed against these, the sweet and quiet worth
 Which my dear lady cherishes at heart
 Might seem a little matter to be shown ;
 Being truly, over these, as much apart
 As the whole heaven is greater than this earth.
 All good to kindred natures cleaveth soon.

IV

SONNET

A Rapture concerning his Lady

WHO is she coming, whom all gaze upon,
 Who makes the air all tremulous with light,
 And at whose side is Love himself ? that none
 Dare speak, but each man's sighs are infinite.
 Ah me ! how she looks round from left to right,
 Let Love discourse : I may not speak thereon.
 Lady she seems of such high benison
 As makes all others graceless in men's sight.
 The honour which is hers cannot be said ;
 To whom are subject all things virtuous,
 While all things beauteous own her deity.
 Ne'er was the mind of man so nobly led,
 Nor yet was such redemption granted us
 That we should ever know her perfectly.

V

BALLATA

Of his Lady among other Ladies

WITH other women I beheld my love ;—
 Not that the rest were women to mine eyes,
 Who only as her shadows seemed to move.

I do not praise her more than with the truth,
 Nor blame I these if it be rightly read.

But while I speak, a thought I may not soothe
 Says to my senses : " Soon shall ye be dead,
 If for my sake your tears ye will not shed."

And then the eyes yield passage, at that thought,
 To the heart's weeping, which forgets her not.

VI

TO GUIDO ORLANDI

SONNET

Of a consecrated Image resembling his Lady

GUIDO, an image of my lady dwells
 At San Michele in Orto, consecrate
 And duly worshipped. Fair in holy state
 She listens to the tale each sinner tells:
 And among them that come to her, who ails
 The most, on him the most doth blessing wait.
 She bids the fiend men's bodies abdicate;
 Over the curse of blindness she prevails,
 And heals sick languors in the public squares.
 A multitude adores her reverently:
 Before her face two burning tapers are;
 Her voice is uttered upon paths afar.
 Yet through the Lesser Brethren's* jealousy
 She is named idol; not being one of theirs.

GUIDO ORLANDI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI

MADRIGAL

In answer to the foregoing Sonnet

IF thou hadst offered, friend, to blessed Mary
 A pious voluntary,
 As thus: "Fair rose, in holy garden set":
 Thou then hadst found a true similitude:
 Because all truth and good
 Are hers, who was the mansion and the gate
 Wherein abode our High Salvation,
 Conceived in her, a Son,
 Even by the angel's greeting whom she met.
 Be thou assured that if one cry to her,
 Confessing, "I did err,"
 For death she gives him life; for she is great.
 Ah! how mayst thou be counselled to implead
 With God thine own misdeed,
 And not another's? Ponder what thou art;
 And humbly lay to heart
 That Publican who wept his proper need.
 The Lesser Brethren cherish the divine
 Scripture and church-doctrine;
 Being appointed keepers of the faith
 Whose preaching succoureth:
 For what they preach is our best medicine.

* The Franciscans, in profession of deeper poverty and humility than belonged to other Orders, called themselves *Fratres minores*.

VII

SONNET

*Of the Eyes of a certain Mandetta, of Thoulouse, which
resemble those of his Lady Joan, of Florence*

A CERTAIN youthful lady in Thoulouse,
Gentle and fair, of cheerful modesty,
Is in her eyes, with such exact degree,
Of likeness unto mine own lady, whose
I am, that through the heart she doth abuse
The soul to sweet desire. It goes from me
To her; yet, fearing, saith not who is she
That of a truth its essence thus subdues.
This lady looks on it with the sweet eyes
Whose glance did erst the wounds of Love anoint
Through its true lady's eyes which are as they.
Then to the heart returns it, full of sighs,
Wounded to death by a sharp arrow's point
Wherewith this lady speeds it on its way.

VIII

BALLATA

He reveals, in a Dialogue, his increasing Love for Mandetta

BEING in thought of love, I chanced to see
Two youthful damozels.
One sang: "Our life inhales
All love continually."

Their aspect was so utterly serene,
So courteous, of such quiet nobleness,
That I said to them: "Yours, I may well ween,
'Tis of all virtue to unlock the place.
Ah! damozels, do not account him base
Whom thus his wound subdues:
Since I was at Thoulouse,
My heart is dead in me."

They turned their eyes upon me in so much
As to perceive how wounded was my heart;
While, of the spirits born of tears, one such
Had been begotten through the constant smart.
Then seeing me, abashed, to turn apart,
One of them said, and laugh'd:
"Love, look you, by his craft
Holds this man thoroughly."

But with grave sweetness, after a brief while,
She who at first had laughed on me replied,
Saying: "This lady, who by Love's great guile
Her countenance in thy heart has glorified,
Look'd thee so deep within the eyes, Love sigh'd
And was awakened there.
If it seem ill to bear,
In him thy hope must be,"

The second piteous maiden, of all ruth,
 Fashioned for sport in Love's own image, said :
 " This stroke, whereof thy heart bears trace in sooth,
 From eyes of too much puissance was shed,
 Whence in thy heart such brightness enterèd,
 Thou mayst not look thereon.
 Say, of those eyes that shone
 Canst thou remember thee ? "

Then said I, yielding answer therewithal
 Unto this virgin's difficult behest :
 " A lady of Thoulouse, whom Love doth call
 Mandetta, sweetly kirtled and enlac'd,
 I do remember to my sore unrest.
 Yea, by her eyes indeed
 My life has been decreed
 To death inevitably."

Go, Ballad, to the city, even Thoulouse,
 And softly entering the Daurade,* look round
 And softly call, that so there may be found
 Some lady who for compleasaunce may choose
 To show thee her who can my life confuse.
 And if she yield thee way,
 Lift thou thy voice and say :
 " For grace I come to thee."

DANTE ALIGHIERI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI

SONNET

*He imagines a pleasant Voyage for Guido, Lapo Gianni,
 and himself, with their three Ladies*

GUIDO, I wish that Lapo, thou, and I,
 Could be by spells conveyed, as it were now,
 Upon a barque, with all the winds that blow
 Across all seas at our good will to hie.
 So no mischance nor temper of the sky
 Should mar our course with spite or cruel slip ;
 But we, observing old companionship,
 To be companions still should long thereby.
 And Lady Joan, and Lady Beatrice,
 And her the thirtieth on my roll,† with us
 Should our good wizard set, o'er seas to move
 And not to talk of anything but love :
 And they three ever to be well at ease,
 As we should be, I think, if this were thus.

* The ancient church of the Daurade still exists at Thoulouse. It was so called from the golden effect of the mosaics adorning it.

† That is, his list of the sixty most beautiful ladies of Florence, referred to in the *Vita Nuova* ; among whom Lapo Gianni's lady, Lagia, would seem to have stood thirtieth.

IX

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*Guido answers the foregoing Sonnet, speaking with shame
of his changed Love*

IF I were still that man, worthy to love,
Of whom I have but the remembrance now,
Or if the lady bore another brow,
To hear this thing might bring me joy thereof.
But thou, who in Love's proper court dost move,
Even there where hope is born of grace,—see how
My very soul within me is brought low :
For a swift archer, whom his feats approve,
Now bends the bow, which Love to him did yield,
In such mere sport against me, it would seem
As though he held his lordship for a jest.
Then hear the marvel which is sorriest :—
My sorely wounded soul forgiveth him,
Yet knows that in his act her strength is kill'd.

X

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*He reports, in a feigned Vision, the successful Issue of
Lapo Gianni's Love*

DANTE, a sigh that rose from the heart's core
Assailed me, while I slumbered, suddenly :
So that I woke o' the instant, fearing sore
Lest it came thither in Love's company :
Till, turning, I beheld the servitor
Of Lady Lagia : " Help me," so said he,
" O help me, Pity." Though he said no more,
So much of Pity's essence entered me,
That I was ware of Love, those shafts he wields
A-whetting, and preferred the mourner's quest
To him, who straightway answered on this wise :
" Go tell my servant that the lady yields,
And that I hold her now at his behest :
If he believe not, let him note her eyes."

XI

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

He mistrusts the Love of Lapo Gianni

I PRAY thee, Dante, shouldst thou meet with Love
 In any place where Lapo then may be,
 That there thou fail not to mark heedfully
 If Love with lover's name that man approve ;
 If to our Master's will his lady move
 Aright, and if himself show fealty :
 For oftentimes, by ill custom, ye may see
 This sort profess the semblance of true love.
 Thou know'st that in the court where Love holds sway
 A law subsists, that no man who is vile
 Can service yield to a lost woman there.
 If suffering aught avail the sufferer,
 Thou straightway shalt discern our lofty style,
 Which needs the badge of honour must display.

XII

SONNET

*On the Detection of a false Friend **

LOVE and the Lady Lagia, Guido and I,
 Unto a certain lord are bounden all,
 Who has released us—know ye from whose thrall ?
 Yet I'll not speak, but let the matter die :
 Since now these three no more are held thereby,
 Who in such homage at his feet did fall
 That I myself was not more whimsical,
 In him conceiving godship from on high.
 Let Love be thanked the first, who first discern'd
 The truth ; and that wise lady afterward,
 Who in fit time took back her heart again ;
 And Guido next, from worship wholly turn'd ;
 And I, as he. But if ye have not heard,
 I shall not tell how much I loved him then.

* I should think, from the mention of Lady Lagia, that this might refer again to Lapo Gianni, who seems (one knows not why) to have fallen into disgrace with his friends. The Guido mentioned is probably Guido Orlandi.

XIII

SONNET

He speaks of a third Love of his

O THOU that often hast within thine eyes
 A Love who holds three shafts,—know thou from me
 That this my sonnet would commend to thee
 (Come from afar) a soul in heavy sighs,
 Which even by Love's sharp arrow wounded lies.
 Twice did the Syrian archer shoot, and he
 Now bends his bow the third time, cunningly,
 That, thou being here, he wound me in no wise.
 Because the soul would quicken at the core
 Thereby, which now is near to utter death,
 From those two shafts, a triple wound that yield.
 The first gives pleasure, yet disquieteth;
 And with the second is the longing for
 The mighty gladness by the third fulfill'd.

XIV

BALLATA

Of a continual Death in Love

THOUGH thou, indeed, hast quite forgotten ruth,
 Its steadfast truth my heart abandons not;
 But still its thought yields service in good part
 To that hard heart in thee.

Alas! who hears believes not I am so.
 Yet who can know? of very surety, none.
 From Love is won a spirit, in some wise,
 Which dies perpetually:

And, when at length in that strange ecstasy
 The heavy sigh will start,
 There rains upon my heart
 A love so pure and fine,
 That I say: "Lady, I am wholly thine." *

* I may take this opportunity of mentioning that, in every case where an abrupt change of metre occurs in one of my translations, it is so also in the original poem.

XV

SONNET

To a Friend who does not pity his Love

IF I entreat this lady that all grace
 Seem not unto her heart an enemy,
 Foolish and evil thou declarest me,
 And desperate in idle stubbornness.
 Whence is such cruel judgment thine, whose face,
 To him that looks thereon, professeth thee
 Faithful, and wise, and of all courtesy,
 And made after the way of gentleness?
 Alas! my soul within my heart doth find
 Sighs, and its grief by weeping doth enhance,
 That, drowned in bitter tears, those sighs depart:
 And then there seems a presence in the mind,
 As of a lady's thoughtful countenance
 Come to behold the death of the poor heart.

XVI

BALLATA

He perceives that his highest Love is gone from him

THROUGH this my strong and new misadventure,
 All now is lost to me
 Which most was sweet in Love's supremacy.

So much of life is dead in its control,
 That she, my pleasant lady of all grace,
 Is gone out of the devastated soul:
 I see her not, nor do I know her place;
 Nor even enough of virtue with me stays
 To understand, ah me!
 The flower of her exceeding purity.

Because there comes—to kill that gentle thought
 With saying that I shall not see her more—
 This constant pain wherewith I am distraught,
 Which is a burning torment very sore,
 Wherein I know not whom I should implore.
 Thrice thanked the Master be
 Who turns the grinding wheel of misery!

Full of great anguish in a place of fear
 The spirit of my heart lies sorrowing,
 Through Fortune's bitter craft. She lured it here,
 And gave it o'er to Death, and barbed the sting;
 She wrought that hope which was a treacherous thing;
 In Time, which dies from me,
 She made me lose mine hour of ecstasy.

For you, perturbed and fearful words of mine,
 Whither yourselves may please, even thither go;
 But always burthened with shame's troublous sign,
 And on my lady's name still calling low.
 For me, I must abide in such deep woe
 That all who look shall see
 Death's shadow on my face assuredly.

XVII

SONNET

Of his Pain from a new Love

WHY from the danger did mine eyes not start,—
 Why not become even blind,—ere through my sight
 Within my soul thou ever couldst alight
 To say: "Dost thou not hear me in thy heart?"
 New torment then, the old torment's counterpart,
 Filled me at once with such a sore affright,
 That, Lady, lady, (I said,) destroy not quite
 Mine eyes and me! O help us where thou art!
 Thou hast so left mine eyes, that love is fain—
 Even Love himself—with pity uncontroll'd
 To bend above them, weeping for their loss:
 Saying: "If any man feel heavy pain,
 This man's more painful heart let him behold:
 Death has it in her hand, cut like a cross."

GUIDO ORLANDI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI

PROLONGED SONNET

He finds fault with the Conceits of the foregoing Sonnet

FRIEND, well I know thou knowest well to bear
 Thy sword's-point, that it pierce the close-locked mail:
 And like a bird to flit from perch to pale:
 And out of difficult ways to find the air:
 Largely to take and generously to share:
 Thrice to secure advantage: to regale
 Greatly the great, and over lands prevail.
 In all thou art, one only fault is there:
 For still among the wise of wit thou say'st
 That Love himself doth weep for thine estate;
 And yet, no eyes no tears: lo now, thy whim!
 Soft, rather say: This is not held in haste;
 But bitter are the hours and passionate
 To him that loves, and love is not for him.

For me, (by usage strengthened to forbear
 From carnal love,) I fall not in such snare.

GIANNI ALFANI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI

SONNET *

On the part of a Lady of Pisa

GUIDO, that Gianni who, a day ago,
 Sought thee, now greets thee (ay and thou mayst laugh!)
 On that same Pisan beauty's sweet behalf
 Who can deal love-wounds even as thou hast done.
 She asked me whether thy good will were prone
 For service unto Love who troubles her,
 If she to thee in suchwise should repair
 That, save by him and Gualtier, 'twere not known:—
 For thus her kindred of ill augury
 Should lack the means wherefrom there might be plann'd
 Worse harm than lying speech that smites afar.
 I told her that thou hast continually
 A goodly sheaf of arrows to thy hand,
 Which well should stead her in such gentle war.

BERNARDO DA BOLOGNA TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI

SONNET

*He writes to Guido, telling him of the Love which a certain
 Pinella showed on seeing him*

UNTO that lowly lovely maid, I wis,
 So poignant in the heart was thy salute,
 That she changed countenance, remaining mute.
 Wherefore I asked: "Pinella, how is this?
 Hast heard of Guido? know'st thou who he is?"
 She answered, "Yea;" then paused, irresolute;
 But I saw well how the love-wounds acute
 Were widened, and the star which Love calls his
 Filled her with gentle brightness perfectly.
 "But, friend, an't please thee, I would have it told,"
 She said, "how I am known to him through thee.
 Yet since, scarce seen, I knew his name of old,—
 Even as the riddle is read, so must it be.
 Oh! send him love of mine a thousand-fold!"

* From a passage in Ubaldini's Glossary (1640) to the "Documenti d'Amore" of Francesco Barberino (1300), I judge that Guido answered the above sonnet, and that Alfani made a rejoinder, from which a scrap there printed appears to be taken. The whole piece existed, in Ubaldini's time, among the Strozzi MSS.

XVIII

TO BERNARDO DA BOLOGNA

SONNET

*Guido answers, commending Pinella, and saying that the Love
he can offer her is already shared by many noble Ladies.*

THE fountain-head that is so bright to see
Gains as it runs in virtue and in sheen,
Friend Bernard; and for her who spoke with thee,
Even such the flow of her young life has been :
So that when Love discourses secretly
Of things the fairest he has ever seen,
He says there is no fairer thing than she,
A lowly maid as lovely as a queen.
And for that I am troubled, thinking of
That sigh wherein I burn upon the waves
Which drift her heart,—poor barque, so ill bested !—
Unto Pinella a great river of love
I send, that's full of sirens, and whose slaves
Are beautiful and richly habited.

DINO COMPAGNI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI

SONNET

He reproves Guido for his Arrogance in Love

No man may mount upon a golden stair,
Guido my master, to Love's palace-sill :
No key of gold will fit the lock that's there,
Nor heart there enter without pure goodwill.
Not if he miss one courteous duty, dare
A lover hope he should his love fulfil ;
But to his lady must make meek repair,
Reaping with husbandry her favours still.
And thou but know'st of Love (I think) his name :
Youth holds thy reason in extremities :
Only on thine own face thou turn'st thine eyes ;
Fairer than Absalom's account'st the same ;
And think'st, as rosy moths are drawn by flame,
To draw the women from their balconies.*

* It is curious to find these poets perpetually rating one another for the want of constancy in love. Guido is rebuked, as above, by Dino Compagni; Cino da Pistoia by Dante (p. 353); and Dante by Guido (p. 370), who formerly, as we have seen (p. 363), had confided to him his doubts of Lapo Gianni.

XIX

TO GUIDO ORLANDI

SONNET

In praise of Guido Orlandi's Lady

A LADY in whom love is manifest—
 That love which perfect honour doth adorn—
 Hath ta'en the living heart out of thy breast,
 Which in her keeping to new life is born :
 For there by such sweet power it is possest
 As even is felt of Indian unicorn : *
 And all its virtue now, with fierce unrest,
 Unto thy soul makes difficult return.
 For this thy lady is virtue's minister
 In suchwise that no fault there is to show,
 Save that God made her mortal on this ground.
 And even herein His wisdom shall be found :
 For only thus our intellect could know
 That heavenly beauty which resembles her.

GUIDO ORLANDI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI

SONNET

He answers the foregoing Sonnet, declaring himself his Lady's Champion

To sound of trumpet rather than of horn,
 I in Love's name would hold a battle-play
 Of gentlemen in arms on Easter Day ;
 And, sailing without oar or wind, be borne
 Unto my joyful beauty ; all that morn
 To ride round her, in her cause seeking fray
 Of arms with all but thee, friend, who dost say
 The truth of her, and whom all truths adorn.
 And still I pray Our Lady's grace above,
 Most reverently, that she whom my thoughts bear
 In sweet remembrance own her Lord supreme.
 Holding her honour dear, as doth behove,—
 In God who therewithal sustaineth her
 Let her abide, and not depart from Him.

* In old representations, the unicorn is often seen with his head in a virgin's lap.

XX

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*He rebukes Dante for his way of Life, after the Death of Beatrice.**

I COME to thee by daytime constantly,
 But in thy thoughts too much of baseness find :
 Greatly it grieves me for thy gentle mind,
 And for thy many virtues gone from thee.
 It was thy wont to shun much company,
 Unto all sorry concourse ill inclin'd :
 And still thy speech of me, heartfelt and kind,
 Had made me treasure up thy poetry.
 But now I dare not, for thine abject life,
 Make manifest that I approve thy rhymes ;
 Nor come I in such sort that thou mayst know.
 Ah ! prythee read this sonnet many times :
 So shall that evil one who bred this strife
 Be thrust from thy dishonoured soul and go.

XXI

BALLATA

Concerning a Shepherd-maid

WITHIN a copse I met a shepherd-maid,
 More fair, I said, than any star to see.

She came with waving tresses pale and bright,
 With rosy cheer, and loving eyes of flame,
 Guiding the lambs beneath her wand aright.
 Her naked feet still had the dew on them,
 As, singing like a lover, so she came ;
 Joyful, and fashioned for all ecstasy.

I greeted her at once, and question made
 What escort had she through the woods in spring.
 But with soft accents she replied and said
 That she was all alone there, wandering ;
 Moreover : " Do you know, when the birds sing,
 My heart's desire is for a mate," said she.

While she was telling me this wish of hers,
 The birds were all in song throughout the wood.
 " Even now then," said my thought, " the time recurs,
 With mine own longing to assuage her mood."
 And so, in her sweet favour's name, I sued
 That she would kiss there and embrace with me.

* This interesting sonnet must refer to the same period of Dante's life regarding which he has made Beatrice address him in words of noble reproach when he meets her in Eden. (*Purg. C. xxx.*)

She took my hand to her with amorous will,
 And answered that she gave me all her heart,
 And drew me where the leaf is fresh and still,
 Where spring the wood-flowers in the shade apart.
 And on that day, by Joy's enchanted art,
 There Love in very presence seemed to be.*

XXII

SONNET

Of an ill-favoured Lady

Just look, Manetto, at that wry-mouthed minx;
 Merely take notice what a wretch it is;
 How well contrived in her deformities,
 How beastly favoured when she scowls and blinks.
 Why, with a hood on (if one only thinks)
 Or muffle of prim veils and scapularies,—
 And set together, on a day like this,
 Some pretty lady with the odious sphinx;—
 Why, then thy sins could hardly have such weight,
 Nor thou be so subdued from Love's attack,
 Nor so possessed in Melancholy's sway,
 But that perforce thy peril must be great
 Of laughing till the very heart-strings crack:
 Either thou'dst die, or thou must run away.

XXIII

TO POPE BONIFACE VIII

SONNET

*After the Pope's Interdict, when the great Houses were
leaving Florence*

NERO, thus much for tidings in thine ear.
 They of the Buondelmonti quake with dread,
 Nor by all Florence may be comforted;
 Noting in thee the lion's ravenous cheer;
 Who more than any dragon giv'st them fear,
 In ancient evil stubbornly array'd;
 Neither by bridge nor bulwark to be stay'd,
 But only by King Pharaoh's sepulchre.
 O in what monstrous sin dost thou engage,—
 All these which are of loftiest blood to drive
 Away, that none dare pause but all take wing!
 Yet sooth it is, thou might'st redeem the pledge
 Even yet, and save thy naked soul alive,
 Wert thou but patient in the bargaining.

* The glossary to Barberino, already mentioned, refers to the existence, among the Strozzi MSS., of a poem by Lapo di Farinata degli Uberti, written in answer to the above ballata of Cavalcanti. As this respondent was no other than Guido's brother-in-law, one feels curious to know what he said to the peccadilloes of his sister's husband. But I fear the poem cannot yet have been published, as I have sought for it in vain at all my printed sources of information.

XXIV

BALLATA

In Exile at Sarzana

BECAUSE I think not ever to return,
 Ballad, to Tuscany,—
 Go therefore thou for me
 Straight to my lady's face,
 Who, of her noble grace,
 Shall show thee courtesy.

Thou seekest her in charge of many sighs,
 Full of much grief and of exceeding fear.
 But have good heed thou come not to the eyes
 Of such as are sworn foes to gentle cheer:
 For, certes, if this thing should chance,—from her
 Thou then couldst only look
 For scorn, and such rebuke
 As needs must bring me pain;—
 Yea, after death again
 Tears and fresh agony.

Surely thou knowest, Ballad, how that Death
 Assails me, till my life is almost sped:
 Thou knowest how my heart still travaileth
 Through the sore pangs which in my soul are bred:—
 My body being now so nearly dead,
 It cannot suffer more.
 Then, going, I implore
 That this my soul thou take
 (Nay, do so for my sake,)
 When my heart sets it free.

Ah! Ballad, unto thy dear offices
 I do commend my soul, thus trembling;
 That thou mayst lead it, for pure piteousness,
 Even to that lady's presence whom I sing.
 Ah! Ballad, say thou to her, sorrowing,
 Whereso thou meet her then:—
 " This thy poor handmaiden
 Is come, nor will be gone,
 Being parted now from one
 Who served Love painfully."

Thou also, thou bewildered voice and weak,
 That goest forth in tears from my grieved heart,
 Shalt, with my soul and with this ballad, speak
 Of my dead mind, when thou dost hence depart,
 Unto that lady (piteous as thou art!)
 Who is so calm and bright,
 It shall be deep delight
 To feel her presence there.
 And thou, Soul, worship her
 Still in her purity.

XXV

CANZONE *

A Song of Fortune

Lo! I am she who makes the wheel to turn ;
 Lo! I am she who gives and takes away ;
 Blamed idly, day by day,
 In all mine acts by you, ye humankind :
 For whoso smites his visage and doth mourn,
 What time he renders back my gifts to me,
 Learns then that I decree
 No state which mine own arrows may not find.
 Who clomb must fall :—this bear ye well in mind,
 Nor say, because he fell, I did him wrong.
 Yet mine is a vain song :
 For truly ye may find out wisdom when
 King Arthur's resting-place is found of men.

Ye make great marvel and astonishment
 What time ye see the sluggard lifted up
 And the just man to drop,
 And ye complain on God and on my sway.
 O humankind, ye sin in your complaint :
 For He, that Lord who made the world to live,
 Lets me not take or give
 By mine own act, but as He wills I may.
 Yet is the mind of man so castaway,
 That it discerns not the supreme behest.
 Alas! ye wretchedest,
 And chide ye at God also? Shall not He
 Judge between good and evil righteously?

Ah! had ye knowledge how God evermore,
 With agonies of soul and grievous heats,
 As on an anvil beats
 On them that in this earth hold high estate,—
 Ye would choose little rather than much store,
 And solitude than spacious palaces ;
 Such is the sore disease
 Of anguish that on all their days doth wait.
 Behold if they be not unfortunate,
 When oft the father dares not trust the son !
 O wealth, with thee is won
 A worm to gnaw for ever on his soul
 Whose abject life is laid in thy control !

If also ye take note what piteous death
 They oftentimes make, whose hoards were manifold,
 Who cities had and gold
 And multitudes of men beneath their hand ;
 Then he among you that most angereth
 Shall bless me, saying, "Lo! I worship thee
 That I was not as he
 Whose death is thus accurst throughout the land."
 But now your living souls are held in band

* This and the three following Canzoni are only to be found in the later collections of Guido Cavalcanti's poems. I have included them on account of their interest, if really his, and especially for the beauty of the last among them; but must confess to some doubts of their authenticity.

Of avarice, shutting you from the true light
 Which shows how sad and slight
 Are this world's treasured riches and array
 That still change hands a hundred times a-day.

For me,—could envy enter in my sphere,
 Which of all human taint is clean and quit,—
 I well might harbour it
 When I behold the peasant at his toil.
 Guiding his team, untroubled, free from fear,
 He leaves his perfect furrow as he goes,
 And gives his field repose
 From thorns and tares and weeds that vex the soil :
 Thereto he labours, and without turmoil
 Entrusts his work to God, content if so
 Such guerdon from it grow
 That in that year his family shall live :
 Nor care nor thought to other things will give.

But now ye may no more have speech of me,
 For this mine office craves continual use :
 Ye therefore deeply muse
 Upon those things which ye have heard the while :
 Yea, and even yet remember heedfully
 How this my wheel a motion hath so fleet,
 That in an eyelid's beat
 Him whom it raised it maketh low and vile.
 None was, nor is, nor shall be of such guile,
 Who could, or can, or shall, I say, at length
 Prevail against my strength.
 But still those men that are my questioners
 In bitter torment own their hearts perverse.

Song, that wast made to carry high intent
 Dissembled in the garb of humbleness,—
 With fair and open face
 To Master Thomas let thy course be bent.
 Say that a great thing scarcely may be pent
 In little room : yet always pray that he
 Commend us, thee and me,
 To them that are more apt in lofty speech :
 For truly one must learn ere he can teach.

XXVI

CANZONE

A Song against Poverty

O POVERTY, by thee the soul is wrapp'd
 With hate, with envy, dolefulness, and doubt.
 Even so be thou cast out,
 And even so he that speaks thee otherwise.
 I name thee now, because my mood is apt
 To curse thee, bride of every lost estate,
 Through whom are desolate
 On earth all honourable things and wise.
 Within thy power each blest condition dies :

By thee, men's minds with sore mistrust are made
 Fantastic and afraid :—
 Thou, hated worse than Death, by just accord,
 And with the loathing of all hearts abhorr'd.

Yea, rightly art thou hated worse than Death,
 For he at length is longed for in the breast.
 But not with thee, wild beast,
 Was ever aught found beautiful or good.
 For life is all that man can lose by death,
 Not fame and the fair summits of applause ;
 His glory shall not pause,
 But live in men's perpetual gratitude.
 While he who on thy naked sill has stood,
 Though of great heart and worthy ever so,
 He shall be counted low.
 Then let the man thou troublest never hope
 To spread his wings in any lofty scope.

Hereby my mind is laden with a fear,
 And I will take some thought to shelter me,
 For this I plainly see :—
 Through thee, to fraud the honest man is led ;
 To tyranny the just lord turneth here,
 And the magnanimous soul to avarice.
 Of every bitter vice
 Thou, to my thinking, art the fount and head ;
 From thee no light in any wise is shed,
 Who bringest to the paths of dusky hell.
 I therefore see full well,
 That death, the dungeon, sickness, and old age,
 Weighed against thee, are blessed heritage.

And what though many a goodly hypocrite,
 Lifting to thee his veritable prayer,
 Call God to witness there
 How this thy burden moved not Him to wrath.
 Why, who may call (of them that muse aright)
 Him poor, who of the whole can say, 'Tis Mine ?
 Methinks I well divine
 That want, to such, should seem an easy path.
 God, who made all things, all things had and hath ;
 Nor any tongue may say that He was poor,
 What while He did endure
 For man's best succour among men to dwell :
 Since to have all, with Him, was possible.

Song, thou shalt wend upon thy journey now :
 And, if thou meet with folk who rail at thee,
 Saying that poverty
 Is not even sharper than thy words allow,—
 Unto such brawlers briefly answer thou,
 To tell them they are hypocrites ; and then
 Say mildly, once again,
 That I, who am nearly in a beggar's case,
 Might not presume to sing my proper praise.

XXVII

CANZONE

He laments the Presumption and Incontinence of his Youth

THE devastating flame of that fierce plague,
 The foe of virtue, fed with others' peace
 More than itself foresees,
 Being still shut in to gnaw its own desire ;
 Its strength not weakened, nor its hues more vague,
 For all the benison that virtue sheds,
 But which for ever spreads
 To be a living curse that shall not tire :
 Or yet again, that other idle fire
 Which flickers with all change as winds may please :
 One whichsoe'er of these
 At length has hidden the true path from me
 Which twice man may not see,
 And quenched the intelligence of joy, till now
 All solace but abides in perfect woe.

Alas ! the more my painful spirit grieves,
 The more confused with miserable strife
 Is that delicious life
 Which sighing it recalls perpetually :
 But its worst anguish, whence it still receives
 More pain than death, is sent, to yield the sting
 Of perfect suffering,
 By him who is my lord and governs me ;
 Who holds all gracious truth in fealty,
 Being nursed in those four sisters' fond caress
 Through whom comes happiness.
 He now has left me ; and I draw my breath
 Wound in the arms of Death,
 Desirous of her : she is cried upon
 In all the prayers my heart puts up alone.

How fierce aforetime and how absolute
 That wheel of flame which turned within my head,
 May never quite be said,
 Because there are not words to speak the whole.
 It slew my hope whereof I lack the fruit,
 And stung the blood within my living flesh,
 To be an intricate mesh
 Of pain beyond endurance or control ;
 Withdrawing me from God, who gave my soul
 To know the sign where honour has its seat
 From honour's counterfeit.
 So in its longing my heart finds not hope,
 Nor knows what door to ope ;
 Since, parting me from God, this foe took thought
 To shut those paths wherein He may be sought.

My second enemy, thrice armed in guile,
 As wise and cunning to mine overthrow
 As her smooth face doth show,
 With yet more shameless strength holds mastery.
 My spirit, naked of its light and vile,
 Is lit by her with her own deadly gleam,
 Which makes all anguish seem
 As nothing to her scourges that I see.
 O thou the body of grace, abide with me
 As thou wast once in the once joyful time;
 And though thou hate my crime,
 Fill not my life with torture to the end;
 But in thy mercy, bend
 My steps, and for thine honour, back again;
 Till, finding joy through thee, I bless my pain.

Since that first frantic devil without faith
 Fell, in thy name, upon the stairs that mount
 Unto the limpid fount
 Of thine intelligence,—withhold not now
 Thy grace, nor spare my second foe from death.
 For lo! on this my soul has set her trust;
 And failing this, thou must
 Prove false to truth and honour, seest thou!
 Then, saving light and throne of strength, allow
 My prayer, and vanquish both my foes at last;
 That so I be not cast
 Into that woe wherein I fear to end.
 Yet if it is ordain'd
 That I must die ere this be perfected,—
 Ah! yield me comfort after I am dead.

Ye unadornèd words obscure of sense,
 With weeping and with sighing go from me,
 And bear mine agony
 (Not to be told by words, being too intense,)
 To His intelligence
 Who moved by virtue shall fulfil my breath
 In human life or compensating death.

XXVIII

CANZONE

A Dispute with Death

"O SLUGGISH, hard, ingrate, what doest thou?
 Poor sinner, folded round with heavy sin,
 Whose life to find out joy alone is bent.
 I call thee, and thou fall'st to deafness now;
 And, deeming that my path whereby to win
 Thy seat is lost, there sitt'st thee down content,
 And hold'st me to thy will subservient.
 But I into thy heart have crept disguised:
 Among thy senses and thy sins I went,
 By roads thou didst not guess, unrecognised.
 Tears will not now suffice to bid me go,
 Nor countenance abased, nor words of woe."

Now, when I heard the sudden dreadful voice
 Wake thus within to cruel utterance,
 Whereby the very heart of hearts did fail,
 My spirit might not any more rejoice,
 But fell from its courageous pride at once,
 And turned to fly, where flight may not avail.
 Then slowly 'gan some strength to re-inhale
 The trembling life which heard that whisper speak,
 And had conceived the sense with sore travail;
 Till in the mouth it murmured, very weak,
 Saying: "Youth, wealth, and beauty, these have I:
 O Death! remit thy claim,—I would not die."

Small sign of pity in that aspect dwells
 Which then had scattered all my life abroad
 Till there was comfort with no single sense:
 And yet almost in piteous syllables,
 When I had ceased to speak, this answer flow'd:
 "Behold what path is spread before thee hence;
 Thy life has all but a day's permanence.
 And is it for the sake of youth there seems
 In loss of human years such sore offence?
 Nay, look unto the end of youthful dreams.
 What present glory does thy hope possess,
 That shall not yield ashes and bitterness?"

But, when I looked on Death made visible,
 From my heart's sojourn brought before mine eyes,
 And holding in her hand my grievous sin,
 I seemed to see my countenance, that fell,
 Shake like a shadow: my heart uttered cries,
 And my soul wept the curse that lay therein.
 Then Death: "Thus much thine urgent prayer shall win:—
 I grant thee the brief interval of youth
 At natural pity's strong soliciting."
 And I (because I knew that moment's ruth
 But left my life to groan for a frail space)
 Fell in the dust upon my weeping face.

So, when she saw me thus abashed and dumb,
 In loftier words she weighed her argument,
 That new and strange it was to hear her speak;
 Saying: "The path thy fears withhold thee from
 Is thy best path. To folly be not shent,
 Nor shrink from me because thy flesh is weak,
 Thou seest how man is sore confused, and eke
 How ruinous Chance makes havoc of his life,
 And grief is in the joys that he doth seek;
 Nor ever pauses the perpetual strife
 'Twixt fear and rage; until beneath the sun
 His perfect anguish be fulfilled and done."

"O Death! thou art so dark and difficult,
 That never human creature might attain
 By his own will to pierce thy secret sense;
 Because, foreshadowing thy dread result,

He may not put his trust in heart or brain,
 Nor power avails him, nor intelligence.
 Behold how cruelly thou takest hence
 These forms so beautiful and dignified,
 And chain'st them in thy shadow chill and dense,
 And forcest them in narrow graves to hide;
 With pitiless hate subduing still to thee
 The strength of man and woman's delicacy."

"Not for thy fear the less I come at last,
 For this thy tremor, for thy painful sweat.
 Take therefore thought to leave (for lo! I call)
 Kinsfolk and comrades, all thou didst hold fast,—
 Thy father and thy mother,—to forget
 All these thy brethren, sisters, children, all.
 Cast sight and hearing from thee; let hope fall;
 Leave every sense and thy whole intellect,
 These things wherein thy life made festival:
 For I have wrought thee to such strange effect
 That thou hast no more power to dwell with these
 As living man. Let pass thy soul in peace."

Yea, Lord. O thou, the Builder of the spheres,
 Who, making me, didst shape me, of thy grace,
 In thine own image and high counterpart;
 Do thou subdue my spirit, long perverse,
 To weep within thy will a certain space,
 Ere yet thy thunder come to rive my heart.
 Set in my hand some sign of what thou art,
 Lord God, and suffer me to seek out Christ,—
 Weeping, to seek Him in thy ways apart;
 Until my sorrow have at length suffic'd
 In some accepted instant to atone
 For sins of thought, for stubborn evil done.

Dishevelled and in tears, go, song of mine,
 To break the hardness of the heart of man:
 Say how his life began
 From dust, and in that dust doth sink supine:
 Yet, say, the unerring spirit of grief shall guide
 His soul, being purified,
 To seek its Maker at the heavenly shrine.

CINO DA PISTOIA

I

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*He interprets Dante's Dream, related in the first Sonnet of
the Vita Nuova **

EACH lover's longing leads him naturally
Unto his lady's heart his heart to show ;
And this it is that Love would have thee know
By the strange vision which he sent to thee.
With thy heart therefore, flaming outwardly,
In humble guise he fed thy lady so,
Who long had lain in slumber, from all woe
Folded within a mantle silently.
Also, in coming, Love might not repress
His joy, to yield thee thy desire achieved,
Whence heart should unto heart true service bring.
But understanding the great love-sickness
Which in thy lady's bosom was conceived,
He pitied her, and wept in vanishing.

II

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

CANZONE

On the Death of Beatrice Portinari

ALBEIT my prayers have not so long delay'd,
But craved for thee, ere this, that Pity and Love
Which only bring our heavy life some rest ;
Yet is not now the time so much o'erstay'd
But that these words of mine which tow'rd's thee move
Must find thee still with spirit disposess'd,
And say to thee : " In Heaven she now is bless'd,
Even as the blessèd name men called her by ; "
While thou dost ever cry,
" Alas ! the blessing of mine eyes is flown ! "
Behold, these words set down
Are needed still, for still thou sorrowest.
Then hearken ; I would yield advisedly
Some comfort : Stay these sighs ; give ear to me.

* See *ante*, page 312.

We know for certain that in this blind world
 Each man's subsistence is of grief and pain,
 Still trailed by fortune through all bitterness.
 Blessed the soul which, when its flesh is furl'd
 Within a shroud, rejoicing doth attain
 To Heaven itself, made free of earthly stress.
 Then wherefore sighs thy heart in abjectness,
 Which for her triumph should exult aloud?
 For He the Lord our God
 Hath called her, hearkening what her Angel said,
 To have Heaven perfected.
 Each saint for a new thing beholds her face,
 And she the face of our Redemption sees,
 Conversing with immortal substances.

Why now do pangs of torment clutch thy heart
 Which with thy love should make thee overjoy'd,
 As him whose intellect hath passed the skies?
 Behold, the spirits of thy life depart
 Daily to Heaven with her, they so are buoy'd
 With their desire, and Love so bids them rise.
 O God! and thou, a man whom God made wise,
 To nurse a charge of care, and love the same!
 I bid thee in His Name
 From sin of sighing grief to hold thy breath,
 Nor let thy heart to death,
 Nor harbour death's resemblance in thine eyes.
 God hath her with Himself eternally,
 Yet she inhabits every hour with thee.

Be comforted, Love cries, be comforted!
 Devotion pleads, Peace, for the love of God!
 O yield thyself to prayers so full of grace;
 And make thee naked now of this dull weed
 Which 'neath thy foot were better to be trod;
 For man through grief despairs and ends his days.
 How ever shouldst thou see the lovely face
 If any desperate death should once be thine?
 From justice so condign
 Withdraw thyself even now; that in the end
 Thy heart may not offend
 Against thy soul, which in the holy place,
 In Heaven, still hopes to see her and to be
 Within her arms. Let this hope comfort thee.

Look thou into the pleasure wherein dwells
 Thy lovely lady who is in Heaven crown'd,
 Who is herself thy hope in Heaven, the while
 To make thy memory hallowed she avails;
 Being a soul within the deep Heaven bound,
 A face on thy heart painted, to beguile
 Thy heart of grief which else should turn it vile.
 Even as she seemed a wonder here below,
 On high she seemeth so,—
 Yea, better known, is there more wondrous yet.
 And even as she was met
 First by the angels with sweet song and smile,
 Thy spirit bears her back upon the wing,
 Which often in those ways is journeying.

Of thee she entertains the blessèd throngs,
 And says to them : " While yet my body thrive
 On earth, I gat much honour which he gave,
 Commending me in his commended songs."
 Also she asks alway of God our Lord
 To give thee peace according to His word.

III

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*He conceives of some Compensation in Death **

DANTE, whenever this thing happeneth,—
 That Love's desire is quite bereft of Hope,
 (Seeking in vain at ladies' eyes some scope
 Of joy, through what the heart for ever saith,)—
 I ask thee, can amends be made by Death?
 Is such sad pass the last extremity?—
 Or may the Soul that never feared to die
 Then in another body draw new breath?
 Lo! thus it is through her who governs all
 Below,—that I, who entered at her door,
 Now at her dreadful window must fare forth.
 Yea, and I think through her it doth befall
 That even ere yet the road is travelled o'er
 My bones are weary and life is nothing worth.

IV

MADRIGAL

*To his Lady Selvaggia Vergiolesi ; likening his Love to a
 Search for Gold*

I AM all bent to glean the golden ore
 Little by little from the river-bed ;
 Hoping the day to see
 When Cræsus shall be conquered in my store.
 Therefore, still sifting where the sands are spread,
 I labour patiently :
 Till, thus intent on this thing and no more,—
 If to a vein of silver I were led,
 It scarce could gladden me.
 And, seeing that no joy's so warm i' the core
 As this whereby the heart is comforted
 And the desire set free,—
 Therefore thy bitter love is still my scope,
 Lady, from whom it is my life's sore theme
 More painfully to sift the grains of hope
 Than gold out of that stream.

* Among Dante's Epistles there is a Latin letter to Cino, which I should judge was written in reply to this Sonnet.

V

SONNET

To Love, in great Bitterness

O LOVE, O thou that, for my fealty,
 Only in torment dost thy power employ,
 Give me, for God's sake, something of thy joy,
 That I may learn what good there is in thee.
 Yea, for, if thou art glad with grieving me,
 Surely my very life thou shalt destroy
 When thou renew'st my pain, because the joy
 Must then be wept for with the misery.
 He that had never sense of good, nor sight,
 Esteems his ill estate but natural,
 Which so is lightlier borne : his case is mine.
 But, if thou wouldst uplift me for a sign,
 Bidding me drain the curse and know it all,
 I must a little taste its opposite.

VI

SONNET

Death is not without but within him

THIS fairest lady, who, as well I wot,
 Found entrance by her beauty to my soul,
 Pierced through mine eyes my heart, which erst was whole,
 Sorely, yet makes as though she knew it not ;
 Nay turns upon me now, to anger wrought ;
 Dealing me harshness for my pain's best dole,
 And is so changed by her own wrath's control,
 That I go thence, in my distracted thought
 Content to die ; and, mourning, cry abroad
 On Death, as upon one afar from me ;
 But Death makes answer from within my heart.
 Then, hearing her so hard at hand to be,
 I do commend my spirit unto God ;
 Saying to her too, " Ease and peace thou art."

VII

SONNET

A Trance of Love

VANQUISHED and weary was my soul in me,
 And my heart gasped after its much lament,
 When sleep at length the painful languor sent.
 And, as I slept (and wept incessantly),—
 Through the keen fixedness of memory
 Which I had cherished ere my tears were spent,
 I passed to a new trance of wonderment;
 Wherein a visible spirit I could see,
 Which caught me up, and bore me to a place
 Where my most gentle lady was alone;
 And still before us a fire seemed to move,
 Out of the which methought there came a moan
 Uttering, "Grace, a little season, grace!
 I am of one that hath the wings of Love."

VIII

SONNET

Of the Grave of Selvaggia, on the Monte della Sambuca

I WAS upon the high and blessed mound,
 And kissed, long worshipping, the stones and grass,
 There on the hard stones prostrate, where, alas!
 That pure one laid her forehead in the ground.
 Then were the springs of gladness sealed and bound,
 The day that unto Death's most bitter pass
 My sick heart's lady turned her feet, who was
 Already in her gracious life renown'd.
 So in that place I spake to Love, and cried:
 "O sweet my god, I am one whom Death may claim
 Hence to be his; for lo! my heart lies here."
 Anon, because my Master lent no ear,
 Departing, still I called Selvaggia's name.
 So with my moan I left the mountain-side.

IX

CANZONE

His Lament for Selvaggia

Ay me, alas! the beautiful bright hair
 That shed reflected gold
 O'er the green growths on either side the way:
 Ay me! the lovely look, open and fair,
 Which my heart's core doth hold
 With all else of that best-remembered day;
 Ay me! the face made gay
 With joy that Love confers;
 Ay me! that smile of hers
 Where whiteness as of snow was visible
 Among the roses at all seasons red!
 Ay me! and was this well,
 O Death, to let me live when she is dead?

Ay me! the calm, erect, dignified walk;
 Ay me! the sweet salute,—
 The thoughtful mind,—the wit discreetly worn;
 Ay me! the clearness of her noble talk,
 Which made the good take root
 In me, and for the evil woke my scorn;
 Ay me! the longing born
 Of so much loveliness,—
 The hope, whose eager stress]
 Made other hopes fall back to let it pass,
 Even till my load of love grew light thereby!
 These thou hast broken, as glass,
 O Death, who makest me, alive, to die!

Ay me! Lady, the lady of all worth;—
 Saint, for whose single shrine
 All other shrines I left, even as Love will'd;—
 Ay me! what precious stone in the whole earth,
 For that pure fame of thine
 Worthy the marble statue's base to yield?
 Ay me! fair vase fulfill'd
 With more than this world's good,—
 By cruel chance and rude
 Cast out upon the steep path of the mountains
 Where Death has shut thee in between hard stones!
 Ay me! two languid fountains
 Of weeping are these eyes, which joy disowns,

Ay me! sharp Death! till what I ask is done
 And my whole life is ended utterly,—
 Answer—must I weep on
 Even thus, and never cease to moan Ay me?

X

TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI

SONNET

He owes nothing to Guido as a Poet

WHAT rhymes are thine which I have ta'en from thee,
 Thou Guido, that thou ever say'st I thief? *
 'Tis true, fine fancies gladly I receive,
 But when was aught found beautiful in thee?
 Nay, I have searched my pages diligently,
 And tell the truth, and lie not, by your leave.
 From whose rich store my web of songs I weave
 Love knoweth well, well knowing them and me.
 No artist I,—all men may gather it;
 Nor do I work in ignorance of pride,
 (Though the world reach alone the coarser sense;)
 But am a certain man of humble wit
 Who journeys with his sorrow at his side,
 For a heart's sake, alas! that is gone hence.

XI

SONNET

He impugns the verdicts of Dante's Commedia

THIS book of Dante's, very sooth to say,
 Is just a poet's lovely heresy,
 Which by a lure as sweet as sweet can be
 Draws other men's concerns beneath its sway;
 While, among stars' and comets' dazzling play,
 It beats the right down, lets the wrong go free,
 Shows some abased, and others in great glee,
 Much as with lovers is Love's ancient way.
 Therefore his vain decrees, wherein he lied,
 Fixing folks' nearness to the Fiend their foe,
 Must be like empty nutshells flung aside.
 Yet through the rash false witness set to grow,
 French and Italian vengeance on such pride
 May fall, like Antony's on Cicero.

* I have not examined Cino's poetry with special reference to this accusation; but there is a Canzone of his in which he speaks of having conceived an affection for another lady from her resemblance to Selvaggia. Perhaps Guido considered this as a sort of plagiarism *de facto* on his own change of love through Mandetta's likeness to Giovanna.

XII

SONNET

*He condemns Dante for not naming, in the Commedia, his friend
Onesto di Boncima, and his Lady Selvaggia*

AMONG the faults we in that book descry
Which has crowned Dante lord of rhyme and thought,
Are two so grave that some attainment is brought
Unto the greatness of his soul thereby.
One is, that holding with Sordello high
Discourse, and with the rest who sang and taught,
He of Onesto di Boncima * nought
Has said, who was to Arnould Daniel † nigh.
The other is, that when he says he came
To see, at summit of the sacred stair,
His Beatrice among the heavenly signs,—
He, looking in the bosom of Abraham,
Saw not that highest of all women there
Who joined Mount Sion to the Apennines.‡

* Between this poet and Cino various friendly sonnets were interchanged, which may be found in the Italian collections. There is also one sonnet by Onesto to Cino, with his answer, both of which are far from being affectionate or respectful. They are very obscure, however, and not specially interesting.

† The Provençal poet, mentioned in C. xxvi of the *Purgatory*.

‡ That is, sanctified the Apennines by her burial on the Monte della Sambuca.

DANTE DA MAIANO

I

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*He interprets Dante Alighieri's Dream, related in the first Sonnet of the Vita Nuova **

OF that wherein thou art a questioner
Considering, I make answer briefly thus,
Good friend, in wit but little prosperous :
And from my words the truth thou shalt infer,—
So hearken to thy dream's interpreter.
If, sound of frame, thou soundly canst discuss
In reason,—then, to expel this overplus
Of vapours which hath made thy speech to err,
See that thou lave and purge thy stomach soon.
But if thou art afflicted with disease,
Know that I count it mere delirium.
Thus of my thought I write thee back the sum :
Nor my conclusions can be changed from these
Till to the leach thy water I have shown.

II

SONNET

He craves interpreting of a Dream of his

THOU that art wise, let wisdom minister
Unto my dream, that it be understood.
To wit: A lady, of her body fair,
And whom my heart approves in womanhood,
Bestowed on me a wreath of flowers, fair-hued
And green in leaf, with gentle loving air ;
After the which, meseemed I was stark nude
Save for a smock of hers that I did wear.
Whereat, good friend, my courage gat such growth
That to mine arms I took her tenderly :
With no rebuke the beauty laughed unloth,
And as she laughed I kissed continually.
I say no more, for that I pledged mine oath,
And that my mother, who is dead, was by.

* See *ante*, page 312.

GUIDO ORLANDI TO DANTE DA MAIANO

SONNET

*He interprets the Dream * related in the foregoing Sonnet*

ON the last words of what you write to me
 I give you my opinion at the first,
 To see the dead must prove corruption nursed
 Within you, by your heart's own vanity.
 The soul should bend the flesh to its decree :
 Then rule it, friend, as fish by line amerced.
 As to the smock, your lady's gift, the worst
 Of words were not too bad for speech so free.
 It is a thing unseemly to declare
 The love of gracious dame or damozel,
 And therewith for excuse to say, I dream'd.
 Tell us no more of this, but think who seem'd
 To call you : mother came to whip you well.
 Love close, and of Love's joy you'll have your share.

III

SONNET

To his Lady Nina, of Sicily

So greatly thy great pleasaunce pleased me,
 Gentle my lady, from the first of all,
 That counting every other blessing small
 I gave myself up wholly to know thee :
 And since I was made thine, thy courtesy
 And worth, more than of earth, celestial,
 I learned, and from its freedom did enthrall
 My heart, the servant of thy grace to be.
 Wherefore I pray thee, joyful countenance,
 Humbly, that it incense or irk thee not,
 If I, being thine, do wait upon thy glance.
 More to solicit, I am all afraid :
 Yet, lady, twofold is the gift, we wot,
 Given to the needy unsolicited.

* There exist no fewer than six answers by different poets, interpreting Dante da Maiano's dream. I have chosen Guido Orlandi's, much the most matter-of-fact of the six, because it is diverting to find the writer again in his antagonistic mood. Among the five remaining answers, in all of which the vision is treated as a very mysterious matter, one is attributed to Dante Alighieri, but seems so doubtful that I have not translated it. Indeed, it would do the greater Dante, if he really wrote it, little credit as a lucid interpreter of dreams; though it might have some interest, as giving him (when compared with the sonnet at page 388) a decided advantage over his lesser namesake in point of courtesy.

IV

SONNET

He thanks his Lady for the Joy he has had from her

WONDERFUL countenance and royal neck,
I have not found your beauty's parallel !
Nor at her birth might any yet prevail
The likeness of these features to partake.
Wisdom is theirs, and mildness : for whose sake
All grace seems stol'n, such perfect grace to swell ;
Fashioned of God beyond delight to dwell
Exalted. And herein my pride I take
Who of this garden have possession,
So that all worth subsists for my behoof
And bears itself according to my will.
Lady, in thee such pleasaunce hath its fill
That whoso is content to rest thereon
Knows not of grief, and holds all pain aloof.

CECCO ANGIOLIERI, DA SIENA

I

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*On the last Sonnet of the Vita Nuova **

DANTE ALIGHIERI, Cecco, your good friend
And servant, gives you greeting as his lord,
And prays you for the sake of Love's accord,
(Love being the Master before whom you bend,) That you will pardon him if he offend,
Even as your gentle heart can well afford.
All that he wants to say is just one word
Which partly chides your sonnet at the end.
For where the measure changes, first you say
You do not understand the gentle speech
A spirit made touching your Beatrice :
And next you tell your ladies how, straightway,
You understand it. Wherefore (look you) each
Of these your words the other's sense denies.

II

SONNET

He will not be too deeply in Love

I AM enamoured, and yet not so much
But that I'd do without it easily ;
And my own mind thinks all the more of me
That Love has not quite penned me in his hutch.
Enough if for his sake I dance and touch
The lute, and serve his servants cheerfully :
An overdose is worse than none would be :
Love is no lord of mine, I'm proud to vouch.
So let no woman who is born conceive
That I'll be her liege slave, as I see some,
Be she as fair and dainty as she will.
Too much of love makes idiots, I believe :
I like not any fashion that turns glum
The heart, and makes the visage sick and ill.

* See *ante*, page 346.

III

SONNET

Of Love in Men and Devils

THE man who feels not, more or less, somewhat
 Of love in all the years his life goes round
 Should be denied a grave in holy ground
 Except with usurers who will bate no groat :
 Nor he himself should count himself a jot
 Less wretched than the meanest beggar found.
 Also the man who in Love's robe is gown'd
 May say that Fortune smiles upon his lot.
 Seeing how love has such nobility
 That if it entered in the lord of Hell
 'Twould rule him more than his fire's ancient sting ;
 He should be glorified to eternity,
 And all his life be always glad and well
 As is a wanton woman in the spring.

IV

SONNET

Of Love, in honour of his mistress Becchina

WHATEVER good is naturally done
 Is born of Love as fruit is born of flower :
 By Love all good is brought to its full power :
 Yea, Love does more than this ; for he finds none
 So coarse but from his touch some grace is won,
 And the poor wretch is altered in an hour.
 So let it be decreed that Death devour
 The beast who says that Love's a thing to shun.
 A man's just worth the good that he can hold,
 And where no love is found, no good is there ;
 On that there's nothing that I would not stake.
 So now, my Sonnet, go as you are told
 To lovers and their sweethearts everywhere,
 And say I made you for Becchina's sake.

V

SONNET

Of Becchina, the Shoemaker's Daughter

WHY, if Becchina's heart were diamond,
 And all the other parts of her were steel,
 As cold to love as snows when they congeal
 In lands to which the sun may not get round ;
 And if her father were a giant crown'd
 And not a donkey born to stitching shoes,
 Or I were but an ass myself ;—to use
 Such harshness, scarce could to her praise redound.
 Yet if she'd only for a minute hear,
 And I could speak if only pretty well,
 I'd let her know that I'm her happiness ;
 That I'm her life should also be made clear,
 With other things that I've no need to tell ;
 And then I feel quite sure she'd answer Yes.

VI

SONNET

To Messer Angiolieri, his Father

If I'd a sack of florins, and all new,
 (Packed tight together, freshly coined and fine,)
 And Arcidosso and Montegiovi mine,*
 And quite a glut of eagle-pieces too,—
 It were but as three farthings to my view
 Without Becchina. Why then all these plots
 To whip me, daddy? Nay, but tell me—what's
 My sin, or all the sins of Turks, to you?
 For I protest (or may I be struck dead!)
 My love's so firmly planted in its place,
 Whipping nor hanging now could change the grain.
 And if you want my reason on this head,
 It is that whoso looks her in the face,
 Though he were old, gets back his youth again.

VII

SONNET

Of the 20th June 1291

I'm full of everything I do not want,
 And have not that wherein I should find ease;
 For alway till Becchina brings me peace
 The heavy heart I bear must toil and pant;
 That so all written paper would prove scant
 (Though in its space the Bible you might squeeze,)
 To say how like the flames of furnaces
 I burn, remembering what she used to grant.
 Because the stars are fewer in heaven's span
 Than all those kisses wherewith I kept tune
 All in an instant (I who now have none!)
 Upon her mouth (I and no other man!)
 So sweetly on the twentieth day of June
 In the new year † twelve hundred ninety-one.

* Perhaps the names of his father's estates.

† The year, according to the calendar of those days, began on the 25th March. The alteration to 1st January was made in 1582 by the Pope, and immediately adopted by all Catholic countries, but by England not till 1752. There is some added vividness in remembering that Cecco's unplatonic love-encounter dates eleven days after the first death-anniversary of Beatrice (9th of June 1291), when Dante tells us that he "drew the resemblance of an angel upon certain tablets." (See *ante*, p. 340.)

VIII

SONNET

In absence from Becchina

My heart's so heavy with a hundred things
 That I feel dead a hundred times a-day ;
 Yet death would be the least of sufferings,
 For life's all suffering save what's slept away ;
 Though even in sleep there is no dream but brings
 From dream-land such dull torture as it may.
 And yet one moment would pluck out these stings,
 If for one moment she were mine to-day
 Who gives my heart the anguish that it has.
 Each thought that seeks my heart for its abode
 Becomes a wan and sorrow-stricken guest :
 Sorrow has brought me to so sad a pass
 That men look sad to meet me on the road ;
 Nor any road is mine that leads to rest.

IX

SONNET

Of Becchina in a rage

WHEN I behold Becchina in a rage,
 Just like a little lad I trembling stand
 Whose master tells him to hold out his hand ;
 Had I a lion's heart, the sight would wage
 Such war against it, that in that sad stage
 I'd wish my birth might never have been plann'd,
 And curse the day and hour that I was bann'd
 With such a plague for my life's heritage.
 Yet even if I should sell me to the Fiend,
 I must so manage matters in some way
 That for her rage I may not care a fig ;
 Or else from death I cannot long be screen'd.
 So I'll not blink the fact, but plainly say
 It's time I got my valour to grow big.

X

SONNET

*He rails against Dante, who had censured his homage to
Becchina*

DANTE ALIGHIERI in Becchina's praise

Won't have me sing, and bears him like my lord.

He's but a pinchbeck florin, on my word ;

Sugar he seems, but salt's in all his ways ;

He looks like wheaten bread, who's bread of maize ;

He's but a sty, though like a tower in height ;

A falcon, till you find that he's a kite ;

Call him a cock !—a hen's more like his case.

Go now to Florence, Sonnet of my own,

And there with dames and maids hold pretty parles,

And say that all he is doth only seem.

And I meanwhile will make him better known

Unto the Count of Provence, good King Charles ; *

And in this way we'll singe his skin for him.

XI

SONNET

Of his four Tormentors

I'm caught, like any thrush the nets surprise,

By Daddy and Becchina, Mammy and Love.

As to the first-named, let thus much suffice,—

Each day he damns me, and each hour thereof ;

Becchina wants so much of all that's nice,

Not Mahomet himself could yield enough ;

And Love still sets me doting in a trice

On trulls who'd seem the Ghetto's proper stuff.

My mother don't do much because she can't,

But I may count it just as good as done,

Knowing the way and not the will's her want.

To-day I tried a kiss with her—just one—

To see if I could make her sulks avaunt :

She said, " The devil rip you up, my son ! "

* This may be either Charles II., King of Naples and Count of Provence, or more probably his son Charles Martel, King of Hungary. We know from Dante that a friendship subsisted between himself and the latter prince, who visited Florence in 1295, and died in the same year, in his father's lifetime (*Paradise*, C. viii.)

XII

SONNET

Concerning his Father

THE dreadful and the desperate hate I bear
 My father (to my praise, not to my shame,)
 Will make him live more than Methusalem;
 Of this I've long ago been made aware.
 Now tell me, Nature, if my hate's not fair.
 A glass of some thin wine not worth a name
 One day I begged (he has whole butts o' the same,)
 And he had almost killed me, I declare.
 "Good Lord, if I had asked for vernage-wine!"
 Said I; for if he'd spit into my face
 I wished to see for reasons of my own.
 Now say that I mayn't hate this plague of mine!
 Why, if you knew what I know of his ways,
 You'd tell me that I ought to knock him down.*

XIII

SONNET

Of all he would do

If I were fire, I'd burn the world away;
 If I were wind, I'd turn my storms thereon;
 If I were water, I'd soon let it drown;
 If I were God, I'd sink it from the day;
 If I were Pope, I'd never feel quite gay
 Until there was no peace beneath the sun;
 If I were Emperor, what would I have done?—
 I'd lop men's heads all round in my own way.
 If I were Death, I'd look my father up;
 If I were Life, I'd run away from him;
 And treat my mother to like calls and runs,
 If I were Cecco (and that's all my hope),
 I'd pick the nicest girls to suit my whim,
 And other folk should get the ugly ones.

XIV

SONNET

He is past all Help

FOR a thing done, repentance is no good,
 Nor to say after, Thus would I have done:
 In life, what's left behind is vainly rued;
 So let a man get used his hurt to shun;
 For on his legs he hardly may be stood
 Again, if once his fall be well begun.
 But to show wisdom's what I never could;
 So where I itch I scratch now, and all's one,
 I'm down, and cannot rise in any way;
 For not a creature of my nearest kin
 Would hold me out a hand that I could reach.
 I pray you do not mock at what I say;
 For so my love's good grace may I not win
 If ever sonnet held so true a speech!

* I have thought it necessary to soften one or two expressions in this sonnet.

XV

SONNET

Of why he is unchanged

WHOEVER without money is in love
 Had better build a gallows and go hang;
 He dies not once, but oftener feels the pang
 Than he who was cast down from Heaven above,
 And certes, for my sins, it's plain enough,
 If Love's alive on earth, that he's myself,
 Who would not be so cursed with want of pelf
 If others paid my proper dues thereof.
 Then why am I not hanged by my own hands?
 I answer: for this empty narrow chink
 Of hope;—that I've a father old and rich,
 And that if once he dies I'll get his lands;
 And die he must, when the sea's dry, I think.
 Meanwhile God keeps him whole and me i' the ditch.

XVI

SONNET

Of why he would be a Scullion

I AM so out of love through poverty
 That if I see my mistress in the street
 I hardly can be certain whom I meet,
 And of her name do scarce remember me,
 Also my courage it has made to be
 So cold, that if I suffered some foul cheat,
 Even from the meanest wretch that one could beat,
 Save for the sin I think he should go free,
 Ay, and it plays me a still nastier trick;
 For, meeting some who erewhile with me took
 Delight, I seem to them a roaring fire.
 So here's a truth whereat I need not stick;—
 That if one could turn scullion to a cook,
 It were a thing to which one might aspire.

XVII

PROLONGED SONNET

When his Clothes were gone

NEVER so bare and naked was church-stone
 As is my clean-stripped doublet in my grasp;
 Also I wear a shirt without a clasp,
 Which is a dismal thing to look upon.
 Ah! had I still but the sweet coins I won
 That time I sold my nag and staked the pay,
 I'd not lie hid beneath the roof to-day
 And eke out sonnets with this moping moan.
 Daily a thousand times stark mad am I
 At my dad's meanness who won't clothe me now,
 For "How about the horse?" is still his cry.
 Till one thing strikes me as clear anyhow,—
 No rag I'll get. The wretch has sworn, I see,
 Not to invest another doit in me.
 And all because of the fine doublet's price
 He gave me, when I vowed to throw no dice,
 And for his damned nag's sake! Well, this is nice!

XVIII

SONNET

He argues his case with Death

GRAMERCY, Death, as you've my love to win,
 Just be impartial in your next assault ;
 And that you may not find yourself in fault,
 Whate'er you do, be quick now and begin.
 As oft may I be pounded flat and thin
 As in Grosseto there are grains of salt,
 If now to kill us both you be not call'd,—
 Both me and him who sticks so in his skin.
 Or better still, look here ; for if I'm slain
 Alone,—his wealth, it's true, I'll never have,
 Yet death is life to one who lives in pain ;
 But if you only kill Saldagno's knave,
 I'm left in Siena (don't you see your gain ?)
 Like a rich man who's made a galley-slave.*

XIX

SONNET

Of Becchina, and of her Husband

I WOULD like better in the grace to be
 Of the dear mistress whom I bear in mind
 (As once I was) than I should like to find
 A stream that washed up gold continually :
 Because no language could report of me
 The joys that round my heart would then be twin'd,
 Who now, without her love, do seem resign'd
 To death that bends my life to its decree.
 And one thing makes the matter still more sad :
 For all the while I know the fault's my own,
 That on her husband I take no revenge,
 Who's worse to her than is to me my dad.
 God send grief has not pulled my courage down,
 That hearing this I laugh ; for it seems strange.

* He means, possibly, that he should be more than ever tormented by his creditors on account of their knowing his ability to pay them ; but the meaning seems very uncertain.

XX

SONNET

*To Becchina's rich Husband **

As thou wert loth to see, before thy feet,
 The dear broad coin roll all the hill-slope down,
 Till, gathering it from rifted clods, some clown
 Should rub it oft and scarcely render it;—
 Tell me, I charge thee, if by generous heat
 Or clutching frost the fruits of earth be grown,
 And by what wind the blight is o'er them strown,
 And with what gloom the tempest is replete.
 Yet daily, in good sooth, as morn by morn
 Thou hear'st the voice of thy poor husbandman
 And those loud herds, his other family,—
 I know, as surely as Becchina's born
 With a kind heart, she does the best she can
 To filch at least one new-bought prize from thee.

XXI

SONNET

On the Death of his Father

LET not the inhabitants of Hell despair,
 For one's got out who seemed to be locked in;
 And Cecco's the poor devil that I mean,
 Who thought for ever and ever to be there.
 But the leaf's turned at last, and I declare
 That now my state of glory doth begin:
 For Messer Angiolieri's slipped his skin,
 Who plagued me, summer and winter, many a year.
 Make haste to Cecco, Sonnet, with a will,
 To him who no more at the Abbey dwells;
 Tell him that Brother Henry's half dried up.†
 He'll never more be down-at-mouth, but fill
 His beak at his own beck,‡ till his life swells
 To more than Enoch's or Elijah's scope.

* This puzzling sonnet is printed in Italian collections with the name of Guido Cavalcanti. It must evidently belong to Angiolieri, and it has certain fine points which make me unwilling to omit it; though partly as to rendering, and wholly as to application, I have been driven on conjecture.

† It would almost seem as if Cecco, in his poverty, had at last taken refuge in a religious house under the name of Brother Henry (*Frate Arrigo*), and as if he here meant that Brother Henry was now decayed, so to speak, through the resuscitation of Cecco. (See *Introduction to Part I.*, p. 307.)

‡ In the original words, "Ma di tal cibo imbecchi lo suo becco," a play upon the name of Becchina seems intended, which I have conveyed as well as I could.

XXII

SONNET

He would slay all who hate their Fathers

WHO utters of his father aught but praise,
 'Twere well to cut his tongue out of his mouth ;
 Because the Deadly Sins are seven, yet doth
 No one provoke such ire as this must raise.
 Were I a priest, or monk in anyways,
 Unto the Pope my first respects were paid,
 Saying, " Holy Father, let a just crusade
 Scourge each man who his sire's good name gainsays."
 And if by chance a handful of such rogues
 At any time should come into our clutch,
 I'd have them cooked and eaten then and there,
 If not by men, at least by wolves and dogs.
 The Lord forgive me ! for I fear me much
 Some words of mine were rather foul than fair,

XXIII

TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*He writes to Dante, then in exile at Verona, defying him as
 no better than himself*

DANTE ALIGHIERI, if I jest and lie,
 You in such lists might run a tilt with me :
 I get my dinner, you your supper, free ;
 And if I bite the fat, you suck the fry ;
 I shear the cloth and you the teasele ply ;
 If I've a strut, who's prouder than you are ?
 If I'm foul-mouthed, you're not particular ;
 And you're turned Lombard, even if Roman I.
 So that, 'fore Heaven ! if either of us flings
 Much dirt at the other, he must be a fool :
 For lack of luck and wit we do these things.
 Yet if you want more lessons at my school,
 Just say so, and you'll find the next touch stings—
 For, Dante, I'm the goad and you're the bull.

GUIDO ORLANDI *

SONNET

Against the "White" Ghibellines

Now of the hue of ashes are the Whites;
 And they go following now after the kind
 Of creatures we call crabs, which, as some find,
 Will only seek their natural food o' nights.
 All day they hide; their flesh has such sore frights
 Lest Death be come for them on every wind,
 Lest now the Lion's † wrath be so inclined
 That they may never set their sin to rights.
 Guelf were they once, and now are Ghibelline:
 Nothing but rebels henceforth be they named,—
 State-foes, as are the Uberti, every one.
 Behold, against the Whites all men must sign
 Some judgment whence no pardon can be claim'd
 Excepting they were offered to Saint John.‡

LAPO GIANNI

I

MADRIGAL

What Love shall provide for him

LOVE, I demand to have my lady in fee.

Fine balm let Arno be;
 The walls of Florence all of silver rear'd,
 And crystal pavements in the public way.

With castles make me fear'd,
 Till every Latin soul have owned my sway.

Be the world peaceful; safe throughout each path;
 No neighbour to breed wrath;
 The air, summer and winter, temperate.

A thousand dames and damsels richly clad
 Upon my choice to wait,
 Singing by day and night to make me glad.

Let me have fruitful gardens of great girth,
 Filled with the strife of birds,
 With water-springs, and beasts that house i' the earth.

Let me seem Solomon for lore of words,
 Samson for strength, for beauty Absalom.

Knights as my serfs be given;
 And as I will, let music go and come;
 Till at the last thou bring me into Heaven.

* Several other pieces by this author, addressed to Guido Cavalcanti and Dante da Maiano, will be found among their poems.

† *I.e.* Florence.

‡ That is, presented at the high altar on the feast-day of St. John the Baptist; a ceremony attending the release of criminals, a certain number of whom were annually pardoned on that day in Florence. This was the disgraceful condition annexed to that recall to Florence which Dante received when in exile at the court of Verona; which others accepted, but which was refused by him in a memorable epistle still preserved.

II

BALLATA

A Message in charge for his Lady Lagia

BALLAD, since Love himself hath fashioned thee
 Within my mind where he doth make abode,
 Hie thee to her who through mine eyes bestow'd
 Her blessing on my heart, which stays with me.

Since thou wast born a handmaiden of Love,
 With every grace thou should'st be perfected,
 And everywhere seem gentle, wise, and sweet.
 And for that thine aspect gives sign thereof,
 I do not tell thee, "Thus much must be said"—
 Hoping, if thou inheritest my wit,
 And com'st on her when speech may ill befit,
 That thou wilt say no words of any kind :
 But when her ear is graciously inclin'd,
 Address her without dread submissively.

Afterward, when thy courteous speech is done,
 (Ended with fair obeisance and salute
 To that chief forehead of serenest good,)
 Wait thou the answer which, in heavenly tone,
 Shall haply stir between her lips, nigh mute
 For gentleness and virtuous womanhood.
 And mark that, if my homage please her mood,
 No rose shall be incarnate in her cheek,
 But her soft eyes shall seem subdued and meek,
 And almost pale her face for delicacy.

For, when at last thine amorous discourse
 Shall have possessed her spirit with that fear
 Of thoughtful recollection which in love
 Comes first,—then say thou that my heart implores
 Only without an end to honour her,
 Till by God's will my living soul remove :
 That I take counsel oftentimes with Love ;
 For he first made my hope thus strong and rife,
 Through whom my heart, my mind, and all my life,
 Are given in bondage to her seigniority.

Then shalt thou find the blessed refuge girt
 I' the circle of her arms, where pity and grace
 Have sojourn, with all human excellence :
 Then shalt thou feel her gentleness exert
 Its rule (unless, alack ! she deem thee base) :
 Then shalt thou know her sweet intelligence :
 Then shalt thou see—O marvel most intense !—
 What thing the beauty of the angels is,
 And what are the miraculous harmonies
 Whereon Love rears the heights of sovereignty.

Move, Ballad, so that none take note of thee,
 Until thou set thy footsteps in Love's road.
 Having arrived, speak with thy visage bow'd,
 And bring no false doubt back, or jealousy.

DINO FRESCOBALDI

I

SONNET

Of what his Lady is

THIS is the damsel by whom love is brought
To enter at his eyes that looks on her ;
This is the righteous maid, the comforter,
Whom every virtue honours unbesought.
Love, journeying with her, unto smiles is wrought,
Showing the glory which surrounds her there ;
Who, when a lowly heart prefers its prayer,
Can make that its transgression come to nought.
And, when she giveth greeting, by Love's rule,
With sweet reserve she somewhat lifts her eyes
Bestowing that desire which speaks to us.
Alone on what is noble looks she thus,
Its opposite rejecting in like wise,
This pitiful young maiden beautiful.

II

SONNET

Of the Star of his Love

THAT star the highest seen in heaven's expanse
Not yet forsakes me with its lovely light :
It gave me her who from her heaven's pure height
Gives all the grace mine intellect demands.
Thence a new arrow of strength is in my hands
Which bears good will whereso it may alight ;
So barbed, that no man's body or soul its flight
Has wounded yet, nor shall wound any man's.
Glad am I therefore that her grace should fall
Not otherwise than thus ; whose rich increase
Is such a power as evil cannot dim.
My sins within an instant perished all
When I inhaled the light of so much peace.
And this Love knows ; for I have told it him.

GIOTTO DI BONDONE

CANZONE

Of the Doctrine of Voluntary Poverty

MANY there are, praisers of Poverty ;
 The which as man's best state is register'd
 When by free choice preferred,
 With strict observance having nothing here.
 For this they find certain authority
 Wrought of an over-nice interpreting.

Now as concerns such thing,
 A hard extreme it doth to me appear,
 Which to commend I fear,
 For seldom are extremes without some vice.
 Let every edifice,
 Of work or word, secure foundation find ;
 Against the potent wind,
 And all things perilous, so well prepar'd
 That it need no correction afterward.

Of poverty which is against the will,
 It never can be doubted that therein
 Lies broad the way to sin.
 For oftentimes it makes the judge unjust ;
 In dames and damsels doth their honour kill ;
 And begets violence and villanies,
 And theft and wicked lies,
 And casts a good man from his fellows' trust.
 And for a little dust
 Of gold that lacks, wit seems a lacking too.
 If once the coat give view
 Of the real back, farewell all dignity.
 Each therefore strives that he
 Should by no means admit her to his sight,
 Who, only thought on, makes his face turn white.

Of poverty which seems by choice elect,
 I may pronounce from plain experience,—
 Not of mine own pretence,—
 That 'tis observed or unobserved at will.
 Nor its observance asks our full respect :
 For no discernment, nor integrity,
 Nor lore of life, nor plea
 Of virtue, can her cold regard instil.
 I call it shame and ill
 To name as virtue that which stifles good.
 I call it grossly rude,
 On a thing bestial to make consequent
 Virtue's inspired advent
 To understanding hearts acceptable :
 For the most wise most love with her to dwell.

Here mayst thou find some issue of demur :
 For lo ! our Lord commendeth poverty.
 Nay, what His meaning be
 Search well : His words are wonderfully deep,

Oft doubly sensed, asking interpreter.
 The state for each most saving, is His will
 For each. Thine eyes unseal,
 And look within, the inmost truth to reap.
 Behold what concord keep
 His holy words with His most holy life.
 In Him the power was rife
 Which to all things apportions time and place.
 On earth He chose such case ;
 And why ? 'Twas His to point a higher life.

But here, on earth, our senses show us still
 How they who preach this thing are least at peace,
 And evermore increase
 Much thought how from this thing they should escape.
 For if one such a lofty station fill,
 He shall assert his strength like a wild wolf,
 Or daily mask himself
 Afresh, until his will be brought to shape ;
 Ay, and so wear the cape
 That direst wolf shall seem like sweetest lamb
 Beneath the constant sham.
 Hence, by their art, this doctrine plagues the world :
 And hence, till they be hurl'd
 From where they sit in high hypocrisy,
 No corner of the world seems safe to me.

Go, Song, to some sworn owls that we have known
 And on their folly bring them to reflect :
 But if they be stiff-neck'd,
 Belabour them until their heads are down.

SIMONE DALL' ANTELLA

PROLONGED SONNET

In the last Days of the Emperor Henry VII

ALONG the road all shapes must travel by,
 How swiftly, to my thinking, now doth fare
 The wanderer who built his watchtower there
 Where wind is torn with wind continually !
 Lo ! from the world and its dull pain to fly,
 Unto such pinnacle did he repair,
 And of her presence was not made aware,
 Whose face, that looks like Peace, is Death's own lie.
 Alas, Ambition, thou his enemy,
 Who lurest the poor wanderer on his way,
 But never bring'st him where his rest may be,—
 O leave him now, for he is gone astray
 Himself out of his very self through thee,
 Till now the broken stems his feet betray,
 And, caught with boughs before and boughs behind,
 Deep in thy tangled wood he sinks entwin'd.

GIOVANNI QUIRINO TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

SONNET

*He commends the work of Dante's life, then drawing
to its close ; and deplores his own deficiencies*

GLORY to God and to God's Mother chaste,
Dear friend, is all the labour of thy days :
Thou art as he who evermore uplays
That heavenly wealth which the worm cannot waste :
So shalt thou render back with interest
The precious talent given thee by God's grace :
While I, for my part, follow in their ways
Who by the cares of this world are possess'd.
For, as the shadow of the earth doth make
The moon's globe dark, when so she is debarr'd
From the bright rays which lit her in the sky,—
So now, since thou my sun didst me forsake,
(Being distant from me), I grow dull and hard,
Even as a beast of Epicurus' sty.

DANTE ALIGHIERI TO GIOVANNI QUIRINO

SONNET

*He answers the foregoing Sonnet ; saying what he feels at
the approach of Death*

THE King by whose rich grace His servants be
With plenty beyond measure set to dwell
Ordains that I my bitter wrath dispel
And lift mine eyes to the great consistory ;
Till, noting how in glorious quires agree
The citizens of that fair citadel,
To the Creator I His creature swell
Their song, and all their love possesses me.
So, when I contemplate the great reward
To which our God has called the Christian seed,
I long for nothing else but only this.
And then my soul is grieved in thy regard,
Dear friend, who reck'st not of thy nearest need,
Renouncing for slight joys the perfect bliss.

APPENDIX TO PART I

I

FORESE DONATI

WHAT follows relates to the very filmiest of all the will-o'-the-wisps which have beset me in making this book. I should be glad to let it lose itself in its own quagmire, but am perhaps bound to follow it as far as may be.

Ubalдини, in his Glossary to Barberino, (published in 1640, and already several times referred to here,) has a rather startling entry under the word *Vendetta*.

After describing this "custom of the country," he says:—

"To leave a vengeance unaccomplished was considered very shameful; and on this account Forese de' Donati sneers at Dante, who did not avenge his father Alighieri: saying to him ironically,—

‘ Ben sò che fosti figliuol d’ Alighieri;
Ed accorgomen pure alla vendetta
Che facesti di lui sì bella e netta; ’

and hence perhaps Dante is menaced in Hell by the Spirit of one of his race."

Now there is no hint to be found anywhere that Dante's father, who died about 1270, in the poet's childhood, came by his death in any violent way. The spirit met in Hell (C. xxix.) is Geri son of Bello Alighieri, and Dante's great-uncle; and he is there represented as passing his kinsman in contemptuous silence on account of *his own* death by the hand of one of the Sacchetti, which remained till then unavenged, and so continued till after Dante's death, when Cione Alighieri fulfilled the *vendetta* by slaying a Sacchetti at the door of his house. If Dante is really the person addressed in the sonnet quoted by Ubalдини, I think it probable (as I shall show presently when I give the whole sonnet) that the ironical allusion is to the death of Geri Alighieri. But indeed the real writer, the real subject, and the real object of this clumsy piece of satire, seem about equally puzzling.

Forese Donati, to whom this Sonnet and another I shall quote are attributed, was the brother of Gemma Donati, Dante's wife, and of Corso and Piccarda Donati. Dante introduces him in the Purgatory (C. xxiii.) as expiating the sin of gluttony. From what is there said, he seems to have been well known in youth to Dante, who speaks also of having wept his death; but at the same time he hints that the life they led together was disorderly and a subject for regret. This can hardly account for such violence as is shown in these sonnets, said to have been written from one to the other; but it is not impossible, of course, that a rancour, perhaps temporary, may have existed at some time between them, especially as Forese probably adhered with the

rest of his family to the party hostile to Dante. At any rate, Ubaldini, Crescimbeni, Quadrio, and other writers on Italian Poetry, seem to have derived this impression from the poems which they had seen in MS. attributed to Forese. They all combine in stigmatizing Forese's supposed productions as very bad poetry, and in fact this seems the only point concerning them which is beyond a doubt. The four sonnets of which I now proceed to give such translations as I have found possible were first published together in 1812 by Fiacchi, who states that he had seen two separate ancient MSS. in both of which they were attributed to Dante and Forese. In rendering them, I have no choice but to adopt in a positive form my conjectures as to their meaning; but that I view these only as conjectures will appear afterwards.

I

DANTE ALIGHIERI TO FORESE DONATI

He taunts Forese, by the nickname of Bicci

O Bicci, pretty son of who knows whom
 Unless thy mother Lady Tessa tell,—
 Thy gullet is already crammed too well,
 Yet others' food thou needs must now consume.
 Lo! he that wears a purse makes ample room
 When thou goest by in any public place,
 Saying, "This fellow with the branded face
 Is thief apparent from his mother's womb."
 And I know one who's fain to keep his bed
 Lest thou shouldst filch it, at whose birth he stood
 Like Joseph when the world its Christmas saw.
 Of Bicci and his brothers it is said
 That with the heat of misbegotten blood
 Among their wives they are nice brothers-in-law.

II

FORESE DONATI TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

He taunts Dante ironically for not avenging Geri Alighieri

RIGHT well I know thou'rt Alighieri's son;
 Nay, that revenge alone might warrant it,
 Which thou didst take, so clever and complete,
 For thy great-uncle who awhile agone
 Paid scores in full. Why, if thou hadst hewn one
 In bits for it, 'twere early still for peace!
 But then thy head's so heaped with things like these
 That they would weigh two sumpter-horses down.
 Thou hast taught us a fair fashion, sooth to say,—
 That whoso lays a stick well to thy back,
 Thy comrade and thy brother he shall be.
 As for their names who've shown thee this good play,
 I'll tell thee, so thou'lt tell me all the lack
 Thou hast of help, that I may stand by thee.

III

DANTE ALIGHIERI TO FORESE DONATI

He taunts him concerning his Wife

To hear the unlucky wife of Bicci cough,
 (Bicci,—Forese as he's called, you know,—)
 You'd fancy she had wintered, sure enough,
 Where icebergs rear themselves in constant snow :
 And Lord ! if in mid-August it is so,
 How in the frozen months must she come off ?
 To wear her socks abed avails not,—no,
 Nor quilting from Cortona, warm and tough.
 Her cough, her cold, and all her other ills,
 Do not afflict her through the rheum of age,
 But through some want within her nest, poor spouse !
 This grief, with other griefs, her mother feels,
 Who says, " Without much trouble, I'll engage,
 She might have married in Count Guido's house ! "

IV

FORESE DONATI TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

He taunts him concerning the unavenged Spirit of Geri Alighieri

THE other night I had a dreadful cough
 Because I'd got no bed-clothes over me ;
 And so, when the day broke, I hurried off
 To seek some gain whatever it might be.
 And such luck as I had I tell you of.
 For lo ! no jewels hidden in a tree
 I find, nor buried gold, nor suchlike stuff,
 But Alighieri among the graves I see,
 Bound by some spell, I know not at whose 'hest,—
 At Solomon's, or what sage's who shall say ?
 Therefore I crossed myself towards the east ;
 And he cried out : " For Dante's love I pray
 Thou loose me ! " But I knew not in the least
 How this were done, so turned and went my way.

Now all this may be pronounced little better than scurrilous doggerel, and I would not have introduced any of it, had I not wished to include everything which could possibly belong to my subject.

Even supposing that the authorship is correctly attributed in each case, the insults heaped on Dante have of course no weight, as coming from one who shows every sign of being both foul-mouthed and a fool. That then even the observance of the *vendetta* had its opponents among the laity, is evident from a passage in Barberino's *Documenti d' Amore*. The two sonnets bearing Dante's name, if not less offensive than the others, are rather more pointed ; but seem still very unworthy even of his least exalted mood.

Accordingly Fraticelli (in his *Minor Works of Dante*) settles to his own satisfaction that these four sonnets are not by Dante and Forese ; but I do not think his arguments conclusive enough to set the matter

quite at rest. He first states positively that Sonnet I. (as above) is by Burchiello, the Florentine barber-poet of the fifteenth century. However, it is only to be found in one edition of Burchiello, and that a late one, of 1757, where it is placed among the pieces which are very doubtfully his. It becomes all the more doubtful when we find it there followed by Sonnet II. (as above), which would seem by all evidence to be at any rate written by a different person from the first, whoever the writers of both may be. Of this sonnet Fraticelli seems to state that he has seen it attributed in one MS. to a certain Bicci Novello; and adds (but without giving any authority) that it was addressed to some descendant of the great poet, also bearing the name of Dante. Sonnet III. is pronounced by Fraticelli to be of uncertain authorship, though if the first is by Burchiello, so must this be. He also decides that the designation, "Bicci, vocato Forese," shows that Forese was the nickname and Bicci the real name; but this is surely quite futile, as the way in which the name is put is to the full as likely to be meant in ridicule as in earnest. Lastly, of Sonnet IV. Fraticelli says nothing.

It is now necessary to explain that Sonnet II., as I translate it, is made up from two versions, the one printed by Fiacchi and the one given among Burchiello's poems; while in one respect I have adopted a reading of my own. I would make the first four lines say—

Ben sò che fosti figliuol d'Alighieri:
Ed accorgomen pure alla vendetta
Che facesti di lui, sì bella e netta,
Dell' *avolin* che diè cambio l'altrieri."

Of the two printed texts one says, in the fourth line—

Dell' aguglin ched ei cambiò l'altrieri;

and the other,

Degli auguglin che diè cambio l'altrieri.

"Aguglino" would be "eaglet," and with this, the whole sense of the line seems quite unfathomable: whereas at the same time "aguglino" would not be an unlikely corrupt transcription, or even corrupt version, of "avolino," which again (according to the often confused distinctions of Italian relationships,) might well be a modification of "avolo" (grandfather), meaning great-uncle. The reading would thus be, "La vendetta che facesti di lui (*i.e.*) dell' *avolino* che diè cambio l'altrieri;" translated literally, "The vengeance which you took for him,—for your great-uncle who gave change the other day." Geri Alighieri might indeed have been said to "give change" or "pay scores in full" by his death, as he himself had been the aggressor in the first instance, having slain one of the Sacchetti, and been afterwards slain himself by another.

I should add that I do not think the possibility, however questionable, of these sonnets being authentically by Dante and Forese, depends solely on the admission of this word "*avolino*."

The rapacity attributed to the "Bicci" of Sonnet I. seems a tendency somewhat akin to the insatiable gluttony which Forese is represented as expiating in Dante's Purgatory. Mention is also there made of Forese's wife, though certainly in a very different strain from that of Sonnet III.; but it is not impossible that the poet might have intended to make amends to her as well as in some degree to her husband's memory. I am really more than half ashamed of so many "possibles" and "not impossibles"; but perhaps, having been led into the subject, am a little inclined that the reader should be worried with it like myself.

At any rate, considering that these Sonnets are attributed by

various old manuscripts to Dante and Forese Donati;—that various writers (beginning with Ubaldini, who seems to have ransacked libraries more than almost any one) have spoken of these and other sonnets by Forese against Dante,—that the feud between the Alighieri and Sacchetti, and the death of Geri, were certainly matters of unabated bitterness in Dante's lifetime, as we find the *vendetta* accomplished even after his death,—and lastly, that the sonnets attributed to Forese seem to be plausibly referable to this subject,—I have thought it pardonable towards myself and my readers to devote to these ill-natured and not very refined productions this very long and tiresome note.

Crescimbeni (*Storia della Volgar Poesia*) gives another sonnet against Dante as being written by Forese Donati, and it certainly resembles these in style. I should add that their obscurity of mere language is excessive, and that my translations therefore are necessarily guesswork here and there; though as to this I may spare particulars except in what affects the question at issue. In conclusion, I hope I need hardly protest against the inference that my translations and statements might be shown to abound in dubious makeshifts and whimsical conjectures; though it would be admitted, on going over the ground I have traversed, that it presents a difficulty of some kind at almost every step.

II

CECCO D'ASCOLI

THERE is one more versifier, contemporary with Dante, to whom I might be expected to refer. This is the ill-fated Francesco Stabili, better known as Cecco d'Ascoli, who was burnt by the Inquisition at Florence in 1327, as a heretic, though the exact nature of his offence is involved in some mystery. He was a narrow, discontented, and self-sufficient writer; and his incongruous poem in *sesta rima*, called *L'Acerba*, contains various references to the poetry of Dante (whom he knew personally) as well as to that of Guido Cavalcanti, made chiefly in a supercilious spirit. These allusions have no poetical or biographical value whatever, so I need say no more of them or their author. And indeed perhaps the "Bicci" sonnets are quite enough of themselves in the way of absolute trash.

III

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

SEVERAL of the little-known sonnets of Boccaccio have reference to Dante, but, being written in the generation which followed his, do not belong to the body of my first division. I therefore place three of them here, together with a few more specimens from the same poet.

There is nothing which gives Boccaccio a greater claim to our regard than the enthusiastic reverence with which he loved to dwell on the *Commedia* and on the memory of Dante, who died when he was seven years old. This is amply proved by his *Life of the Poet* and *Commentary on the Poem*, as well as by other passages in his writings both in prose and poetry. The first of the three following sonnets relates to his public reading and elucidation of Dante, which took place at Florence, by a decree of the State, in 1373. The second sonnet shows

how the greatest minds of the generation which immediately succeeded Dante already paid unhesitating tribute to his political as well as poetical greatness. In the third sonnet, it is interesting to note the personal love and confidence with which Boccaccio could address the spirit of his mighty master, unknown to him in the flesh.

I

To one who had censured his public Exposition of Dante

IF Dante mourns, there wheresoe'er he be,
 That such high fancies of a soul so proud
 Should be laid open to the vulgar crowd,
 (As, touching my Discourse, I'm told by thee,)
 This were my grievous pain; and certainly
 My proper blame should not be disavow'd;
 Though thereof somewhat, I declare aloud
 Were due to others, not alone to me.
 False hopes, true poverty, and therewithal
 The blinded judgment of a host of friends,
 And their entreaties, made that I did thus.
 But of all this there is no gain at all
 Unto the thankless souls with whose base ends
 Nothing agrees that's great or generous.

II

Inscription for a portrait of Dante

DANTE ALIGHIERI, a dark oracle
 Of wisdom and of art, I am; whose mind
 Has to my country such great gifts assign'd
 That men account my powers a miracle.
 My lofty fancy passed as low as Hell,
 As high as Heaven, secure and unconfin'd;
 And in my noble book doth every kind
 Of earthly lore and heavenly doctrine dwell.
 Renown'd Florence was my mother,—nay,
 Stepmother unto me her piteous son,
 Through sin of cursed slander's tongue and tooth,
 Ravenna sheltered me so cast away;
 My body is with her,—my soul with One
 For whom no envy can make dim the truth.

III

To Dante in Paradise, after Fiammetta's death

DANTE, if thou within the sphere of Love,
 As I believe, remain'st contemplating
 Beautiful Beatrice, whom thou didst sing
 Erewhile, and so wast drawn to her above;—
 Unless from false life true life thee remove
 So far that Love's forgotten, let me bring
 One prayer before thee: for an easy thing
 This were, to thee whom I do ask it of.

I know that where all joy doth most abound
 In the Third Heaven, my own Fiammetta sees
 The grief which I have borne since she is dead.
 O pray her (if mine image be not drown'd
 In Lethe) that her prayers may never cease
 Until I reach her and am comforted.

I add three further examples of Boccaccio's poetry, chosen for their beauty alone. Two of these relate to Maria d'Aquino, if she indeed be the lady whom, in his writings, he calls Fiammetta. The third has a playful charm very characteristic of the author of the *Decameron*; while its beauty of colour (to our modern minds, privileged to review the whole pageant of Italian Art,) might recall the painted pastorals of Giorgione.

IV

Of Fiammetta singing

LOVE steered my course, while yet the sun rode high,
 On Scylla's waters to a myrtle-grove:
 The heaven was still and the sea did not move;
 Yet now and then a little breeze went by
 Stirring the tops of trees against the sky:
 And then I heard a song as glad as love,
 So sweet that never yet the like thereof
 Was heard in any mortal company.
 "A nymph, a goddess, or an angel sings
 Unto herself, within this chosen place,
 Of ancient loves;" so said I at that sound.
 And there my lady, 'mid the shadowings
 Of myrtle-trees, 'mid flowers and grassy space,
 Singing I saw, with others who sat round.

V

Of his last sight of Fiammetta

ROUND her red garland and her golden hair
 I saw a fire about Fiammetta's head;
 Thence to a little cloud I watched it fade,
 Than silver or than gold more brightly fair;
 And like a pearl that a gold ring doth bear,
 Even so an angel sat therein, who sped
 Alone and glorious throughout heaven, array'd
 In sapphires and in gold that lit the air.
 Then I rejoiced as hoping happy things,
 Who rather should have then discerned how God
 Had haste to make my lady all His own,
 Even as it came to pass. And with these stings
 Of sorrow, and with life's most weary load
 I dwell, who fain would be where she is gone.

VI

Of three Girls and of their Talk

By a clear well, within a little field
Full of green grass and flowers of every hue,
Sat three young girls, relating (as I knew)
Their loves. And each had twined a bough to shield
Her lovely face ; and the green leaves did yield
The golden hair their shadow ; while the two
Sweet colours mingled, both blown lightly through
With a soft wind for ever stirred and still'd.
After a little while one of them said,
(I heard her,) " Think ! If, ere the next hour struck,
Each of our lovers should come here to-day,
Think you that we should fly or feel afraid ? "
To whom the others answered, " From such luck
A girl would be a fool to run away."

END OF PART I

PART II

POETS CHIEFLY BEFORE DANTE

TABLE OF POETS IN PART II

I. CIULLO D'ALCAMO, 1172—78.

Ciullo is a popular form of the name Vincenzo, and Alcamo an Arab fortress some miles from Palermo. The Dialogue, which is the only known production of this poet, holds here the place generally accorded to it as the earliest Italian poem (exclusive of one or two dubious inscriptions) which has been preserved to our day. Arguments have sometimes been brought to prove that it must be assigned to a later date than the poem by Folcachiero, which follows it in this volume; thus ascribing the first honours of Italian poetry to Tuscany, and not to Sicily, as is commonly supposed. Trucchi, however, (in the preface to his valuable collection,) states his belief that the two poems are about contemporaneous, fixing the date of that by Ciullo between 1172 and 1178,—chiefly from the fact that the fame of Saladin, to whom this poet alludes, was most in men's mouths during that interval. At first sight, any casual reader of the original would suppose that this poem must be unquestionably the earliest of all, as its language is far the most unformed and difficult; but much of this might, of course, be dependent on the inferior dialect of Sicily, mixed however in this instance (as far as I can judge) with mere nondescript *patois*.

II. FOLCACHIERO DE' FOLCACHIERI, KNIGHT OF SIENA, 1177.

The above date has been assigned with probability to Folcachiero's Canzone, on account of its first line, where the whole world is said to be "living without war"; an assertion which seems to refer its production to the period of the celebrated peace concluded at Venice between Frederick Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III.

III. LODOVICO DELLA VERNACCIA, 1200.

IV. SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI; BORN, 1182; DIED, 1226.

His baptismal name was Giovanni, and his father was Bernardone Moriconi, whose mercantile pursuits he shared till the age of twenty-five; after which his life underwent the extraordinary change which resulted in his canonization, by Gregory IX., three years after his death, and in the formation of the Religious Order called Franciscans.

V. FREDERICK II., EMPEROR; BORN, 1194; DIED, 1250.

The life of Frederick II., and his excommunication and deposition from the Empire by Innocent IV., to whom, however, he did not

succumb, are matters of history which need no repetition. Intellectually, he was in all ways a highly-gifted and accomplished prince; and lovingly cultivated the Italian language, in preference to the many others with which he was familiar. The poem of his which I give has great passionate beauty; yet I believe that an allegorical interpretation may here probably be admissible; and that the lady of the poem may be the Empire, or perhaps the Church herself, held in bondage by the Pope.

VI. ENZO, KING OF SARDINIA; BORN, 1225; DIED, 1272.

The unfortunate Enzo was a natural son of Frederick II., and was born at Palermo. By his own warlike enterprise, at an early age (it is said at fifteen!) he subjugated the Island of Sardinia, and was made King of it by his father. Afterwards he joined Frederick in his war against the Church, and displayed the highest promise as a leader; but at the age of twenty-five was taken prisoner by the Bolognese, whom no threats or promises from the Emperor could induce to set him at liberty. He died in prison at Bologna, after a confinement of nearly twenty-three years. A hard fate indeed for one who, while moving among men, excited their hopes and homage, still on record, by his great military genius and brilliant gifts of mind and person.

VII. GUIDO GUINICELLI, 1220.

This poet, certainly the greatest of his time, belonged to a noble and even princely Bolognese family. Nothing seems known of his life, except that he was married to a lady named Beatrice, and that in 1274, having adhered to the Imperial cause, he was sent into exile, but whither cannot be learned. He died two years afterwards. The highest praise has been bestowed by Dante on Guinicelli, in the *Commedia* (Purg. C. xxvi.), in the *Convito*, and in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*; and many instances might be cited in which the works of the great Florentine contain reminiscences of his Bolognese predecessor; especially the third canzone of Dante's *Convito* may be compared with Guido's most famous one "On the Gentle Heart."

VIII. GUERZO DI MONTECANTI, 1220.

IX. INGHILFREDI, SICILIANO, 1220.

X. RINALDO D'AQUINO, 1250.

I have placed this poet, belonging to a Neapolitan family, under the date usually assigned to him; but Trucchi states his belief that he flourished much earlier, and was a contemporary of Folcachiero; partly on account of two lines in one of his poems which say,—

"Lo Imperadore con pace
Tutto il mondo mantene."

If so, the mistake would be easily accounted for, as there seem to have been various members of the family named Rinaldo, at different dates.

XI. JACOPO DA LENTINO, 1250.

This Sicilian poet is generally called "the Notary of Lentino." The low estimate expressed of him, as well as of Bonaggiunta and Guittone, by Dante (Purg. C. xxiv.), must be understood as referring in great measure to their want of grammatical purity and nobility of style, as we may judge when the passage is taken in conjunction with the principles of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. However, Dante also attri-

butes his own superiority to the fact of his writing only when love (or natural impulse) really prompted him,—the highest certainly of all laws relating to art:—

“To mi son un che quando
Amor mi spira, noto, ed in quel modo
Ch’ ei detta dentro, vo significando.”

A translation does not suffer from such offences of dialect as may exist in its original; and I think my readers will agree that, chargeable as he is with some conventionality of sentiment, the Notary of Lentino is often not without his claims to beauty and feeling. There is a peculiar charm in the sonnet which stands first among my specimens.

XII. MAZZEO DI RICCO, DA MESSINA, 1250.

XIII. PANNUCCIO DAL BAGNO, PISANO, 1250.

XIV. GIACOMINO PUGLIESI, KNIGHT OF PRATO, 1250.

Of this poet there seems nothing to be learnt; but he deserves special notice as possessing rather more poetic individuality than usual, and also as furnishing the only instance, among Dante’s predecessors, of a poem (and a very beautiful one) written on a lady’s death.

XV. FRA GUITTONE D’AREZZO, 1250.

Guittone was not a monk, but derived the prefix to his name from the fact of his belonging to the religious and military order of *Cavalieri di Santa Maria*. He seems to have enjoyed a greater literary reputation than almost any writer of his day; but certainly his poems, of which many have been preserved, cannot be said to possess merit of a prominent kind; and Dante shows by various allusions that he considered them much over-rated. The sonnet I have given is somewhat remarkable, from Petrarch’s having transplanted its last line into his *Trionfi d’Amore* (cap. III.). Guittone is the author of a series of Italian letters to various eminent persons, which are the earliest known epistolary writings in the language.

XVI. BARTOLOMEO DI SANT’ ANGELO, 1250.

XVII. SALADINO DA PAVIA, 1250.

XVIII. BONAGGIUNTA URBICIANI, DA LUCCA, 1250.

XIX. MEO ABBRACCIACCA, DA PISTOIA, 1250.

XX. UBALDO DI MARCO, 1250.

XXI. SIMBUONO GIUDICE, 1250.

XXII. MASOLINO DA TODI, 1250.

XXIII. ONESTO DI BONCIMA, BOLOGNESE, 1250.

Onesto was a doctor of laws, and an early friend of Cino da Pistoia. He was living as late as 1301, though his career as a poet may be fixed somewhat further back.

XXIV. TERINO DA CASTEL FIORENTINO, 1250.

XXV. MAESTRO MIGLIORE, DA FIRENZA, 1250.

XXVI. DELLO DA SIGNA, 1250.

XXVII. FOLGORE DA SAN GEMINIANO, 1250.

XXVIII. GUIDO DELLE COLONNE, 1250.

This Sicilian poet has few equals among his contemporaries, and is ranked high by Dante in his treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. He visited England, and wrote in Latin a *Historia de regibus et rebus Angliæ*, as well as a *Historia destructionis Trojæ*.

XXIX. PIER MORONELLI, DI FIORENZA, 1250.

XXX. CIUNCIO FIORENTINO, 1250.

XXXI. RUGGIERI DI AMICI, SICILIANO, 1250.

XXXII. CARNINO Ghiberti, DA FIORENZA, 1250.

XXXIII. PRINZIVALLE DORIA, 1250.

Prinzivalle commenced by writing Italian poetry, but afterwards composed verses entirely in Provençal, for the love of Beatrice, Countess of Provence. He wrote also, in Provençal prose, a treatise "On the dainty Madness of Love," and another "On the War of Charles, King of Naples, against the tyrant Manfredi." He held various high offices, and died at Naples in 1276.

XXXIV. RUSTICO DI FILIPPO; BORN ABOUT 1200; DIED, 1270.

The writings of this Tuscan poet (called also Rustico Barbuti) show signs of more vigour and versatility than was common in his day, and he probably began writing in Italian verse even before many of those already mentioned. In his old age, he, though a Ghibelline, received the dedication of the *Tesoretto* from the Guelf Brunetto Latini, who there pays him unqualified homage for surpassing worth in peace and war. It is strange that more should not be known regarding this doubtless remarkable man. His compositions have sometimes much humour, and on the whole convey the impression of an active and energetic nature. Moreover, Trucchi pronounces some of them to be as pure in language as the poems of Dante or Guido Cavalcanti, though written thirty or forty years earlier.

XXXV. PUCCIARELLO DI FIORENZA, 1260.

XXXVI. ALBERTUCCIO DELLA VIOLA, 1260.

XXXVII. TOMMASO BUZZUOLA, DA FAENZA, 1280.

XXXVIII. NOFFO BONAGUIDA, 1280.

XXXIX. LIPPO PASCHI DE' BARDI, 1280.

XL. SER PACE, NOTAIO DA FIORENZA, 1280.

XLI. NICCOLÒ DEGLI ALBIZZI, 1300.

The noble Florentine family of Albizzi produced writers of poetry in more than one generation. The vivid and admirable sonnet which I have translated is the only one I have met with by Niccolò. I must confess my inability to trace the circumstances which gave rise to it.

XLII. FRANCESCO DA BARBERINO; BORN, 1264; DIED, 1348.

With the exception of Brunetto Latini, (whose poems are neither very poetical nor well adapted for extract,) Francesco da Barberino shows by far the most sustained productiveness among the poets who preceded Dante, or were contemporaries of his youth. Though born only one year in advance of Dante, Barberino seems to have undertaken, if not completed, his two long poetic treatises, some years before the commencement of the *Commedia*.

This poet was born at Barberino di Valdelsa, of a noble family, his father being Neri di Rinuccio da Barberino. Up to the year of his father's death, 1296, he pursued the study of law chiefly in Bologna and Padua; but afterwards removed to Florence for the same purpose, and seems to have been there, even earlier, one of the many distinguished disciples of Brunetto Latini, who probably had more influence than any other one man in forming the youth of his time to the great things they accomplished. After this he travelled in France and elsewhere; and on his return to Italy in 1313, was the first who, by special favour of Pope Clement V., received the grade of Doctor of Laws in Florence. Both as lawyer and as citizen, he held great trusts and discharged them honourably. He was twice married, the name of his second wife being Barna di Tano, and had several children. At the age of eighty-four he died in the great Plague of Florence. Of the two works which Barberino has left, one bears the title of *Documenti d'Amore*, literally "Documents of Love," but perhaps more properly rendered as "Laws of Courtesy"; while the other is called *Del Reggimento e dei Costumi delle Donne*,—"Of the Government and Conduct of Women." They may be described, in the main, as manuals of good breeding, or social chivalry, the one for men and the other for women. Mixed with vagueness, tediousness, and not seldom with artless absurdity, they contain much simple wisdom, much curious record of manners, and (as my specimens show) occasional poetic sweetness or power, though these last are far from being their most prominent merits. The first-named treatise, however, has much more of such qualities than the second; and contains, moreover, passages of homely humour which startle by their truth as if written yesterday. At the same time, the second book is quite as well worth reading, for the sake of its authoritative minuteness in matters which ladies, nowadays, would probably consider their own undisputed region; and also for the quaint gravity of certain surprising prose anecdotes of real life, with which it is interspersed. Both these works remained long unprinted, the first edition of the *Documenti d'Amore* being that edited by Ubaldini in 1640, at which time he reports the *Reggimento*, etc., to be only possessed by his age "in name and in desire." This treatise was afterwards brought to light, but never printed till 1815. I should not forget to state that Barberino attained some knowledge of drawing, and that Ubaldini had seen his original MS. of the *Documenti*, containing, as he says, skilful miniatures by the author.

Barberino never appears to have taken a very active part in politics, but he inclined to the Imperial and Ghibelline party. This contributes with other things to render it rather singular that we find no poetic correspondence or apparent communication of any kind between him and his many great countrymen, contemporaries of his long life, and with whom he had more than one bond of sympathy. His career stretched from Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, and Cino da Pistoia, to Petrarca and Boccaccio; yet only in one respectful but not enthusiastic notice of him by the last-named writer (*Genealogia degli Dei*), do we ever meet with an allusion to him by any of the greatest men of his time. Nor in his own writings, as far as I remember, are they ever referred to. His epitaph is said to have been written by Boccaccio, but this is doubtful.

For some interesting notices of, and translations from, Barberino, I may refer the reader to the tract on "Italian Courtesy Books," by my brother W. M. Rossetti, issued by the Early English Text Society.

XLIII. FAZIO DEGLI UBERTI, 1326—60.

The dates of this poet's birth and death are not ascertainable, but I have set against his name two dates which result from his writings as belonging to his lifetime. He was a member of that great house

of the Uberti which was driven from Florence on the expulsion of the Ghibellines in 1267, and which was ever afterwards specially excluded by name from the various amnesties offered from time to time to the exiled Florentines. His grandfather was Farinata degli Uberti, whose stern nature, unyielding even amid penal fires, has been recorded by Dante in the tenth canto of the *Inferno*. Farinata's son Lapo, himself a poet, was the father of Fazio (*i.e.* Bonifazio), who was no doubt born in the lifetime of Dante, and in some place of exile, but where is not known. In his youth he was enamoured of a certain Veronese lady named Angiola, and was afterwards married, but whether to her or not is again among the uncertainties. Certain it is that he had a son named Leopardò, who, after his father's death at Verona, settled in Venice, where his descendants maintained an honourable rank for the space of two succeeding centuries. Though Fazio appears to have suffered sometimes from poverty, he enjoyed high reputation as a poet, and is even said, on the authority of various early writers, to have publicly received the laurel crown; but in what city of Italy this took place we do not learn.

There is much beauty in several of Fazio's lyrical poems, of which, however, no great number have been preserved. The finest of all is the Canzone which I have translated; whose excellence is such as to have procured it the high honour of being attributed to Dante, so that it is to be found in most editions of the *Canzoniere*; and as far as poetic beauty is concerned, it must be allowed to hold even there an eminent place. Its style, however, (as Monti was the first to point out in our own day, though Ubaldini, in his Glossary to Barberino, had already quoted it as the work of Fazio,) is more particularizing than accords with the practice of Dante; while, though certainly more perfect than any other poem by Fazio, its manner is quite his; bearing especially a strong resemblance throughout in structure to one canzone, where he speaks of his love with minute reference to the seasons of the year. Moreover, Fraticelli tells us that it is not attributed to Dante in any one of the many ancient MSS. he had seen, but has been fathered on him solely on the authority of a printed collection of 1518. This contested Canzone is well worth fighting for; and the victor would deserve to receive his prize at the hands of a peerless Queen of Beauty, for never was beauty better described. I believe we may decide that the triumph belongs by right to Fazio.

An exile by inheritance, Fazio seems to have acquired restless tastes; and in the latter years of his life (which was prolonged to old age), he travelled over a great part of Europe, and composed his long poem entitled *Il Dittamondo*,—"The Song of the World." This work, though by no means contemptible in point of execution, certainly falls far short of its conception, which is a grand one; the topics of which it treats in great measure,—geography and natural history,—rendering it in those days the native home of all credulities and monstrosities. In scheme it was intended as an earthly parallel to Dante's Sacred Poem, doing for this world what he did for the other. At Fazio's death it remained unfinished, but I should think by very little; the plan of the work seeming in the main accomplished. The whole earth (or rather all that was then known of it) is traversed,—its surface and its history,—ending with the Holy Land, and thus bringing Man's world as near as may be to God's; that is, to the point at which Dante's office begins. No conception could well be nobler, or worthier even now of being dealt with by a great master. To the work of such a man, Fazio's work might afford such first materials as have usually been furnished beforehand to the greatest poets by some unconscious steward.

XLIV. FRANCO SACCHETTI; BORN, 1335; DIED, SHORTLY AFTER 1400.

This excellent writer is the only member of my gathering who was

born after the death of Dante, which event (in 1321) preceded Franco's birth by some fourteen years. I have introduced a few specimens of his poetry, partly because their attraction was irresistible, but also because he is the earliest Italian poet with whom playfulness is the chief characteristic; for even with Boccaccio, in his poetry, this is hardly the case, and we can but ill accept as playfulness the cynical humour of Cecco Angiolieri: perhaps Rustico di Filippo alone might put in claims to priority in this respect. However, Franco Sacchetti wrote poems also on political subjects; and had he belonged more strictly to the period of which I treat, there is no one who would better have deserved abundant selection. Besides his poetry, he is the author of a well-known series of three hundred stories; and Trucchi gives a list of prose works by him which are still in MS., and whose subjects are genealogical, historical, natural-historical, and even theological. He was a prolific writer, and one who well merits complete and careful publication. The pieces which I have translated, like many others of his, are written for music.

Franco Sacchetti was a Florentine noble by birth, and was the son of Benci di Uguccone Sacchetti. Between this family and the Alighieri there had been a *vendetta* of long standing (spoken of here in the *Appendix to Part I.*), but which was probably set at rest before Franco's time, by the deaths of at least one Alighieri and two Sacchetti. After some years passed in study, Franco devoted himself to commerce, like many nobles of the republic, and for that purpose spent some time in Slavonia, whose uncongenial influences he has recorded in an amusing poem. As his literary fame increased, he was called to many important offices; was one of the *Priori* in 1383, and for some time was deputed to the government of Faenza, in the absence of its lord, Astorre Manfredi. He was three times married; to Felice degli Strozzi, to Ghita Gherardini, and to Nannina di Santi Bruni.

XLV. ANONYMOUS POEMS.

CIULLO D'ALCAMO

DIALOGUE

Lover and Lady

HE

Thou sweetly-smelling fresh red rose
 That near thy summer art,
 Of whom each damsel and each dame
 Would fain be counterpart;
 Oh! from this fire to draw me forth
 Be it in thy good heart:
 For night or day there is no rest with me,
 Thinking of none, my lady, but of thee.

SHE

If thou hast set thy thoughts on me,
 Thou hast done a foolish thing.
 Yea, all the pine-wood of this world
 Together might'st thou bring,
 And make thee ships, and plough the sea
 Therewith for corn-sowing,
 Ere any way to win me could be found:
 For I am going to shear my locks all round.

HE

Lady, before thou shear thy locks
 I hope I may be dead :
 For I should lose such joy thereby
 And gain such grief instead.
 Merely to pass and look at thee,
 Rose of the garden-bed,
 Has comforted me much, once and again.
 Oh ! if thou wouldst but love, what were it then !

SHE

Nay, though my heart were prone to love,
 I would not grant it leave.
 Hark ! should my father or his kin
 But find thee here this eve,
 Thy loving body and lost breath
 Our moat may well receive.
 Whatever path to come here thou dost know,
 By the same path I counsel thee to go.

HE

And if thy kinsfolk find me here,
 Shall I be drowned then ? Marry,
 I'll set, for price against my head,
 Two thousand agostari.
 I think thy father would not do't
 For all his lands in Bari.
 Long life to the Emperor ! Be God's the praise !
 Thou hear'st, my beauty, what thy servant says.

SHE

And am I then to have no peace
 Morning or evening ?
 I have strong coffers of my own
 And much good gold therein ;
 So that if thou couldst offer me
 The wealth of Saladin,
 And add to that the Soldan's money-hoard,
 Thy suit would not be anything toward.

HE

I have known many women, love,
 Whose thoughts were high and proud,
 And yet have been made gentle by
 Man's speech not over-loud.
 If we but press ye long enough,
 At length ye will be bow'd ;
 For still a woman's weaker than a man.
 When the end comes, recall how this began.

SHE

God grant that I may die before
 Any such end do come,—
 Before the sight of a chaste maid
 Seem to me troublesome !
 I marked thee here all yestereve
 Lurking about my home,
 And now I say, Leave climbing, lest thou fall,
 For these thy words delight me not at all.

HE

How many are the cunning chains
 Thou hast wound round my heart !
 Only to think upon thy voice
 Sometimes I groan apart.
 For I did never love a maid
 Of this world, as thou art,
 So much as I love thee, thou crimson rose.
 Thou wilt be mine at last : this my soul knows.

SHE

If I could think it would be so,
 Small pride it were of mine
 That all my beauty should be meant
 But to make thee to shine.
 Sooner than stoop to that, I'd shear
 These golden tresses fine,
 And make one of some holy sisterhood ;
 Escaping so thy love, which is not good.

HE

If thou unto the cloister fly,
 Thou cruel lady and cold,
 Unto the cloister I will come
 And by the cloister hold ;
 For such a conquest liketh me
 Much better than much gold ;
 At matins and at vespers, I shall be
 Still where thou art. Have I not conquered thee ?

SHE

Out and alack ! wherefore am I
 Tormented in suchwise ?
 Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour,
 In whom my best hope lies,
 O give me strength that I may hush
 This vain man's blasphemies !
 Let him seek through the earth ; 'tis long and broad ;
 He will find fairer damsels, O my God !

HE

I have sought through Calabria,
 Lombardy, and Tuscany,
 Rome, Pisa, Lucca, Genoa,
 All between sea and sea :
 Yea, even to Babylon I went
 And distant Barbary :
 But not a woman found I anywhere
 Equal to thee, who art indeed most fair.

SHE

If thou have all this love for me,
 Thou canst no better do
 Than ask me of my father dear
 And my dear mother too :
 They willing, to the abbey-church
 We will together go,
 And, before Advent, thou and I will wed ;
 After the which, I'll do as thou hast said.

HE

These thy conditions, lady mine,
 Are altogether nought :
 Despite of them, I'll make a net
 Wherein thou shalt be caught.
 What, wilt thou put on wings to fly ?
 Nay, but of wax they're wrought,—
 They'll let thee fall to earth, not rise with thee !
 So, if thou canst, then keep thyself from me.

SHE

Think not to fright me with thy nets
 And suchlike childish gear ;
 I am safe pent within the walls
 Of this strong castle here ;
 A boy before he is a man
 Could give me as much fear.
 If suddenly thou get not hence again,
 It is my prayer thou mayst be found and slain.

HE

Wouldst thou in very truth that I
 Were slain, and for thy sake ?
 Then let them hew me to such mince
 As a man's limbs may make !
 But meanwhile I shall not stir hence
 Till of that fruit I take
 Which thou hast in thy garden, ripe enough :
 All day and night I thirst to think thereof.

SHE

None have partaken of that fruit,
 Not Counts nor Cavaliers :
 Though many have reached up for it,
 Barons and great Seigneurs,
 They all went hence in wrath because
 They could not make it theirs.
 Then how canst *thou* think to succeed alone
 Who hast not a thousand ounces of thine own ?

HE

How many nosegays I have sent
 Unto thy house, sweet soul !
 At least till I am put to proof,
 This scorn of thine control.
 For if the wind, so fair for thee,
 Turn ever and wax foul,
 Be sure that thou shalt say when all is done,
 "Now is my heart heavy for him that's gone."

SHE

If by my grief thou couldst be grieved,
 God send me a grief soon !
 I tell thee that though all my friends
 Prayed me as for a boon,
 Saying, "Even for the love of us,
 Love thou this worthless loon,"
 Thou shouldst not have the thing that thou dost hope.
 No, verily ; nor for the realm o' the Pope.

HE

Now could I wish that I in truth
 Were dead here in thy house :
 My soul would get its vengeance then ;
 Once known, the thing would rouse
 A rabble, and they'd point and say,—
 "Lo ! she that breaks her vows,
 And, in her dainty chamber, stabs !" Love, see :
 One strikes just thus : it is soon done, pardie !

SHE

If now thou do not hasten hence,
 (My curse companioning),
 That my stout friends will find thee here
 Is a most certain thing :
 After the which, my gallant sir,
 Thy points of reasoning
 May chance, I think, to stand thee in small stead,
 Thou hast no friend, sweet friend, to bring thee aid.

HE

Thou sayest truly, saying that
 I have not any friend :
 A landless stranger, lady mine,
 None but his sword defend.
 One year ago, my love began,
 And now, is this the end ?
 Oh ! the rich dress thou worest on that day
 Since when thou art walking at my side alway !

SHE

So 'twas my dress enamoured thee !
 What marvel ? I did wear
 A cloth of samite silver-flowered,
 And gems within my hair.
 But one more word ; if on Christ's Book
 To wed me thou didst swear,
 There's nothing now could win me to be thine :
 I had rather make my bed in the sea-brine.

HE

And if thou make thy bed therein,
 Most courteous lady and bland,
 I'll follow all among the waves,
 Paddling with foot and hand ;
 Then, when the sea hath done with thee,
 I'll seek thee on the sand.
 For I will not be conquered in this strife :
 I'll wait, but win ; or losing, lose my life.

SHE

For Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
 Three times I cross myself.
 Thou art no godless heretic,
 Nor Jew, whose God's his pelf :
 Even as I know it then, meseems,
 Thou needs must know thyself
 That woman, when the breath in her doth cease,
 Loseth all savour and all loveliness.

HE

Woe's me ! Perforce it must be said
 No craft could then avail :
 So that if thou be thus resolved,
 I know my suit must fail.
 Then have some pity, of thy grace !
 Thou mayst, love, very well ;
 For though thou love not me, my love is such
 That 'tis enough for both—yea overmuch,

SHE

Is it even so? Learn then that I
 Do love thee from my heart.
 To-morrow, early in the day,
 Come here, but now depart.
 By thine obedience in this thing
 I shall know what thou art,
 And if thy love be real or nothing worth;
 Do but go now, and I am thine henceforth.

HE

Nay, for such promise, my own life,
 I will not stir a foot.
 I've said, if thou wouldst tear away
 My love even from its root,
 I have a dagger at my side
 Which thou mayst take to do't:
 But as for going hence, it will not be.
 O hate me not! my heart is burning me.

SHE

Think'st thou I know not that thy heart
 Is hot and burns to death?
 Of all that thou or I can say,
 But one word succoureth.
 Till thou upon the Holy Book
 Give me thy bounden faith,
 God is my witness that I will not yield:
 For with thy sword 'twere better to be kill'd.

HE

Then on Christ's Book, borne with me still
 To read from and to pray,
 (I took it, fairest, in a church,
 The priest being gone away,)
 I swear that my whole self shall be
 Thine always from this day.
 And now at once give joy for all my grief,
 Lest my soul fly, that's thinner than a leaf.

SHE

Now that this oath is sworn, sweet lord,
 There is no need to speak:
 My heart, that was so strong before,
 Now feels itself grow weak.
 If any of my words were harsh,
 Thy pardon: I am meek
 Now, and will give thee entrance presently.
 It is best so, sith so it was to be.

FOLCACHIERO DE' FOLCACHIERI, KNIGHT OF SIENA

CANZONE

He speaks of his condition through Love

ALL the whole world is living without war,
 And yet I cannot find out any peace.
 O God ! that this should be !
 O God ! what does the earth sustain me for ?
 My life seems made for other lives' ill-ease :
 All men look strange to me ;
 Nor are the wood-flowers now
 As once, when up above
 The happy birds in love
 Made such sweet verses, going from bough to bough.

And if I come where other gentlemen
 Bear arms, or say of love some joyful thing—
 Then is my grief most sore,
 And all my soul turns round upon me then :
 Folk also gaze upon me, whispering,
 Because I am not what I was before.
 I know not what I am.
 I know how wearisome
 My life is now become,
 And that the days I pass seem all the same.

I think that I shall die ; yea, death begins ;
 Though 'tis no set-down sickness that I have,
 Nor are my pains set down.
 But to wear raiment seems a burden since
 This came, nor ever any food I crave ;
 Not any cure is known
 To me, nor unto whom
 I might commend my case :
 This evil therefore stays
 Still where it is, and hope can find no room.

I know that it must certainly be Love :
 No other Lord, being thus set over me,
 Had judged me to this curse ;
 With such high hand he rules, sitting above,
 That of myself he takes two parts in fee,
 Only the third being hers.
 Yet if through service I
 Be justified with God,
 He shall remove this load,
 Because my heart with inmost love doth sigh.

Gentle my lady, after I am gone,
 There will not come another, it may be,
 To show thee love like mine :
 For nothing can I do, neither have done,
 Except what proves that I belong to thee
 And am a thing of thine.
 Be it not said that I
 Despaired and perished, then ;
 But pour thy grace, like rain,
 On him who is burned up, yea, visibly.

LODOVICO DELLA VERNACCIA

SONNET

He exhorts the State to vigilance

THINK a brief while on the most marvellous arts
 Of our high-purposed labour, citizens ;
 And having thought, draw clear conclusion thence ;
 And say, do not ours seem but childish parts ?
 Also on these intestine sores and smart
 Ponder advisedly ; and the deep sense
 Thereof shall bow your heads in penitence,
 And like a thorn shall grow into your hearts.
 If, of our foreign foes, some prince or lord
 Is now, perchance, some whit less troublesome,
 Shall the sword therefore drop into the sheath ?
 Nay, grasp it as the friend that warranteth :
 For unto this vile rout, our foes at home,
 Nothing is high or awful save the sword.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

CANTICA

*Our Lord Christ : of Order **

SET Love in order, thou that lovest Me.
 Never was virtue out of order found ;
 And though I fill thy heart desirously,
 By thine own virtue I must keep My ground :
 When to My love thou dost bring charity,
 Even she must come with order girt and gown'd.
 Look how the trees are bound
 To order, bearing fruit ;
 And by one thing compute,
 In all things earthly, order's grace or gain.

All earthly things I had the making of
 Were numbered and were measured then by Me ;
 And each was ordered to its end by Love,
 Each kept, through order, clean for ministry.
 Charity most of all, when known enough,
 Is of her very nature orderly,
 Lo, now ! what heat in thee,
 Soul, can have bred this rout ?
 Thou putt'st all order out.
 Even this love's heat must be its curb and rein.

* This speech occurs in a long poem on Divine Love, half ecstatic, half scholastic, and hardly appreciable now. The passage stands well by itself, and is the only one spoken by our Lord.

FREDERICK II. EMPEROR

CANZONE

Of his Lady in bondage

FOR grief I am about to sing,
 Even as another would for joy ;
 Mine eyes which the hot tears destroy
 Are scarce enough for sorrowing :
 To speak of such a grievous thing
 Also my tongue I must employ,
 Saying : Woe's me, who am full of woes !
 Not while I live shall my sighs cease
 For her in whom my heart found peace :
 I am become like unto those
 That cannot sleep for weariness,
 Now I have lost my crimson rose.

And yet I will not call her lost ;
 She is not gone out of the earth ;
 She is but girded with a girth
 Of hate, that clips her in like frost.
 Thus says she every hour almost :—
 “ When I was born, 'twas an ill birth !
 O that I never had been born,
 If I am still to fall asleep
 Weeping, and when I wake to weep ;
 If he whom I most loathe and scorn
 Is still to have me his, and keep
 Smiling about me night and morn !

“ O that I never had been born
 A woman ! a poor, helpless fool,
 Who can but stoop beneath the rule
 Of him she needs must loathe and scorn !
 If ever I feel less forlorn,
 I stand all day in fear and dule,
 Lest he discern it, and with rough
 Speech mock at me, or with his smile
 So hard you scarce could call it guile :
 No man is there to say, ‘ Enough.’
 O, but if God waits a long while,
 Death cannot always stand aloof !

“ Thou, God the Lord, dost know all this :
 Give me a little comfort then,
 Him who is worst among bad men
 Smite thou for me. Those limbs of his
 Once hidden where the sharp worm is,
 Perhaps I might see hope again.
 Yet for a certain period
 Would I seem like as one that saith
 Strange things for grief, and murmureth
 With smitten palms and hair abroad :
 Still whispering under my held breath,
 ‘ Shall I not praise Thy name, O God ? ’

"Thou, God the Lord, dost know all this :
 It is a very weary thing
 Thus to be always trembling :
 And till the breath of his life cease,
 The hate in him will but increase,
 And with his hate my suffering.
 Each morn I hear his voice bid them
 That watch me, to be faithful spies
 Lest I go forth and see the skies ;
 Each night, to each, he saith the same :—
 And in my soul and in mine eyes
 There is a burning heat like flame."

Thus grieves she now : but she shall wear
 This love of mine, whereof I spoke,
 About her body for a cloak,
 And for a garland in her hair,
 Even yet : because I mean to prove,
 Not to speak only, this my love.

ENZO, KING OF SARDINIA

SONNET

On the Fitness of Seasons

THERE is a time to mount ; to humble thee
 A time ; a time to talk, and hold thy peace ;
 A time to labour, and a time to cease ;
 A time to take thy measures patiently ;
 A time to watch what Time's next step may be ;
 A time to make light count of menaces,
 And to think over them a time there is ;
 There is a time when to seem not to see.
 Wherefore I hold him well-advised and sage
 Who evermore keeps prudence facing him,
 And lets his life slide with occasion ;
 And so comports himself, through youth to age,
 That never any man at any time
 Can say, Not thus, but thus thou shouldst have done.

GUIDO GUINICELLI

I

SONNET

Concerning Lucy

WHEN Lucy draws her mantle round her face,
 So sweeter than all else she is to see,
 That hence unto the hills there lives not he
 Whose whole soul would not love her for her grace.
 Then seems she like a daughter of some race
 That holds high rule in France or Germany :
 And a snake's head stricken off suddenly
 Throbs never as then throbs my heart to embrace
 Her body in these arms, even were she loth ;—
 To kiss her lips, to kiss her cheeks, to kiss
 The lids of her two eyes which are two flames.
 Yet what my heart so longs for, my heart blames :
 For surely sorrow might be bred from this
 Where some man's patient love abides its growth.

II

CANZONE

Of the Gentle Heart

WITHIN the gentle heart Love shelters him
 As birds within the green shade of the grove.
 Before the gentle heart, in nature's scheme,
 Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love.
 For with the sun, at once,
 So sprang the light immediately ; nor was
 Its birth before the sun's.
 And Love hath his effect in gentleness
 Of very self ; even as
 Within the middle fire the heat's excess.

The fire of Love comes to the gentle heart
 Like as its virtue to a precious stone ;
 To which no star its influence can impart
 Till it is made a pure thing by the sun :
 For when the sun hath smit
 From out its essence that which there was vile,
 The star endoweth it.
 And so the heart created by God's breath
 Pure, true, and clean from guile,
 A woman, like a star, enamoureth.

In gentle heart Love for like reason is
 For which the lamp's high flame is fanned and bow'd :
 Clear, piercing bright, it shines for its own bliss ;
 Nor would it burn there else, it is so proud.
 For evil natures meet
 With Love as it were water met with fire,
 As cold abhorring heat.
 Through gentle heart Love doth a track divine,—
 Like knowing like ; the same
 As diamond runs through iron in the mine,

The sun strikes full upon the mud all day :
 It remains vile, nor the sun's worth is less.
 "By race I am gentle," the proud man doth say :
 He is the mud, the sun is gentleness.
 Let no man predicate
 That aught the name of gentleness should have,
 Even in a King's estate,
 Except the heart there be a gentle man's.
 The star-beam lights the wave,—
 Heaven holds the star and the star's radiance.

God, in the understanding of high Heaven,
 Burns more than in our sight the living sun :
 There to behold His face unveiled is given ;
 And Heaven, whose will is homage paid to One
 Fulfils the things which live
 In God, from the beginning excellent.
 So should my lady give
 That truth which in her eyes is glorified,
 On which her heart is bent,
 To me whose service waiteth at her side.

My lady, God shall ask, "What daredst thou?"
 (When my soul stands with all her acts review'd ;)
 "Thou passedst Heaven, into My sight, as now,
 To make Me of vain love similitude.
 To Me doth praise belong,
 And to the Queen of all the realm of grace
 Who slayeth fraud and wrong."
 Then may I plead : "As though from Thee he came,
 Love wore an angel's face :
 Lord, if I loved her, count it not my shame."

III

SONNET

He will praise his Lady

YEA, let me praise my lady whom I love :
 Likening her unto the lily and rose :
 Brighter than morning star her visage glows ;
 She is beneath even as her Saint above ;
 She is as the air in summer which God wove
 Of purple and of vermillion glorious ;
 As gold and jewels richer than man knows.
 Love's self, being love for her, must holier prove,
 Ever as she walks she hath a sober grace,
 Making bold men abashed and good men glad ;
 If she delight thee not, thy heart must err.
 No man dare look on her, his thoughts being base :
 Nay, let me say even more than I have said ;—
 No man could think base thoughts who looked on her.

IV

CANZONE

He perceives his Rashness in Love, but has no choice

I HOLD him, verily, of mean emprise,
 Whose rashness tempts a strength too great to bear ;
 As I have done, alas ! who turned mine eyes
 Upon those perilous eyes of the most fair.
 Unto her eyes I bow'd ;
 No need her other beauties in that hour
 Should aid them, cold and proud :
 As when the vassals of a mighty lord,
 What time he needs his power,
 Are all girt round him to make strong his sword.

With such exceeding force the stroke was dealt
 That by mine eyes its path might not be stay'd ;
 But deep into the heart it pierced, which felt
 The pang of the sharp wound, and waxed afraid ;
 Then rested in strange wise,
 As when some creature utterly outworn
 Sinks into bed and lies.
 And she the while doth in no manner care,
 But goes her way in scorn,
 Beholding herself alway proud and fair.

And she may be as proud as she shall please,
 For she is still the fairest woman found :
 A sun she seems among the rest ; and these
 Have all their beauties in her splendour drown'd.
 In her is every grace,—
 Simplicity of wisdom, noble speech,
 Accomplished loveliness ;
 All earthly beauty is her diadem,
 This truth my song would teach,—
 My lady is of ladies chosen gem.

Love to my lady's service yieldeth me,—
 Will I, or will I not, the thing is so,—
 Nor other reason can I say or see,
 Except that where it lists the wind doth blow.
 He rules and gives no sign ;
 Nor once from her did show of love upbuoy
 This passion which is mine.
 It is because her virtue's strength and stir
 So fill her full of joy
 That I am glad to die for love of her.

V

SONNET

Of Moderation and Tolerance

HE that has grown to wisdom hurries not,
 But thinks and weighs what Reason bids him do ;
 And after thinking he retains his thought
 Until as he conceived the fact ensue.
 Let no man to o'erweening pride be wrought,
 But count his state as Fortune's gift and due.
 He is a fool who deems that none has sought
 The truth, save he alone, or knows it true.
 Many strange birds are on the air abroad,
 Nor all are of one flight or of one force,
 But each after his kind dissimilar :
 To each was portioned of the breath of God,
 Who gave them divers instincts from one source.
 Then judge not thou thy fellows what they are.

VI

SONNET

Of Human Presumption

AMONG my thoughts I count it wonderful,
 How foolishness in man should be so rife
 That masterly he takes the world to wife
 As though no end were set unto his rule :
 In labour alway that his ease be full,
 As though there never were another life ;
 Till Death throws all his order into strife,
 And round his head his purposes doth pull.
 And evermore one sees the other die,
 And sees how all conditions turn to change,
 Yet in no wise may the blind wretch be heal'd.
 I therefore say, that sin can even estrange
 Man's very sight, and his heart satisfy
 To live as lives a sheep upon the field.

GUERZO DI MONTECANTI

SONNET

He is out of heart with his Time

IF any man would know the very cause
 Which makes me to forget my speech in rhyme,
 All the sweet songs I sang in other time,—
 I'll tell it in a sonnet's simple clause.
 I hourly have beheld how good withdraws
 To nothing, and how evil mounts the while :
 Until my heart is gnawed as with a file,
 Nor aught of this world's worth is what it was.
 At last there is no other remedy
 But to behold the universal end ;
 And so upon this hope my thoughts are urged :
 To whom, since truth is sunk and dead at sea,
 There has no other part or prayer remain'd,
 Except of seeing the world's self submerged.

INGHILFREDI, SICILIANO

CANZONE

He rebukes the Evil of that Time

HARD is it for a man to please all men :
 I therefore speak in doubt,
 And as one may that looketh to be chid.
 But who can hold his peace in these days ?—when
 Guilt cunningly slips out,
 And Innocence atones for what he did ;
 When worth is crushed, even if it be not hid ;
 When on crushed worth, guile sets his foot to rise ;
 And when the things wise men have counted wise
 Make fools to smile and stare and lift the lid.

Let none who have not wisdom govern you :
 For he that was a fool
 At first shall scarce grow wise under the sun.
 And as it is, my whole heart bleeds anew
 To think how hard a school
 Young hope grows old at, as these seasons run.
 Behold, sirs, we have reached this thing for one :—
 The lord before his servant bends the knee,
 And service puts on lordship suddenly.
 Ye speak o' the end ? Ye have not yet begun,

I would not have ye without counsel ta'en
 Follow my words ; nor meant,
 If one should talk and act not, to praise him
 But who, being much opposed, speaks not again,
 Confesseth himself shent
 And put to silence,—by some loud-mouthed mime,
 Perchance, for whom I speak not in this rhyme.
 Strive what ye can ; and if ye cannot all,
 Yet should not your hearts fall :
 The fruit commends the flower in God's good time.

(For without fruit, the flower delights not God) :
 Wherefore let him whom Hope
 Puts off, remember time is not gone by.
 Let him say calmly : " Thus far on this road
 A foolish trust buoyed up
 My soul, and made it like the summer fly
 Burned in the flame it seeks : even so was I :
 But now I'll aid myself : for still this trust,
 I find, falleth to dust :
 The fish gapes for the bait-hook, and doth die."

And yet myself, who bid ye do this thing,—
 Am I not also spurn'd
 By the proud feet of Hope continually ;
 Till that which gave me such good comforting
 Is altogether turn'd
 Unto a fire whose heat consumeth me ?
 I am so girt with grief that my thoughts be
 Tired of themselves, and from my soul I loathe
 Silence and converse both ;
 And my own face is what I hate to see.

Because no act is meet now nor unmeet.
 He that does evil, men applaud his name,
 And the well-doer must put up with shame :
 Yea, and the worst man sits in the best seat.

RINALDO D'AQUINO

I

CANZONE

He is resolved to be joyful in Love

A THING is in my mind,—
 To have my joy again,
 Which I had almost put away from me.
 It were in foolish kind
 For ever to refrain
 From song, and renounce gladness utterly.
 Seeing that I am given into the rule
 Of Love, whom only pleasure makes alive,
 Whom pleasure nourishes and brings to growth :
 The wherefore sullen sloth
 Will he not suffer in those serving him ;
 But pleasant they must seem,
 That good folk love them and their service thrive ;
 Nor even their pain must make them sorrowful.

So bear he him that thence
 The praise of men be gain'd,—
 He that would put his hope in noble Love ;
 For by great excellence
 Alone can be attain'd
 That amorous joy which wisdom may approve.
 The way of Love is this, righteous and just ;
 Then whoso would be held of good account,
 To seek the way of Love must him befit,—
 Pleasure, to wit.
 Through pleasure, man attains his worthiness :
 For he must please
 All men, so bearing him that Love may mount
 In their esteem ; Love's self being in his trust.

Trustful in servitude
 I have been and will be,
 And loyal unto Love my whole life through.
 A hundred-fold of good
 Hath he not guerdoned me
 For what I have endured of grief and woe ?
 Since he hath given me unto one of whom
 Thus much he said,—thou mightest seek for aye
 Another of such worth so beauteous.
 Joy therefore may keep house
 In this my heart, that it hath loved so well.
 Meseems I scarce could dwell
 Ever in weary life or in dismay
 If to true service still my heart gave room.

Serving at her pleasaunce
 Whose service pleasureth,
 I am enriched with all the wealth of Love.
 Song hath no utterance
 For my life's joyful breath
 Since in this lady's grace my homage throve.
 Yea, for I think it would be difficult
 One should conceive my former abject case :—
 Therefore have knowledge of me from this rhyme.
 My penance-time
 Is all accomplished now, and all forgot,
 So that no jot
 Do I remember of mine evil days.
 It is my lady's will that I exult.

Exulting let me take
 My joyful comfort, then,
 Seeing myself in so much blessedness,
 Mine ease even as mine ache
 Accepting, let me gain
 No pride towards Love ; but with all humbleness,
 Even still, my pleasurable service pay.
 For a good servant ne'er was left to pine :
 Great shall his guerdon be who greatly bears.
 But, because he that fears
 To speak too much, by his own silence shent,
 Hath sometimes made lament,—
 I am thus boastful, lady ; being thine
 For homage and obedience night and day.

II

CANZONE

A Lady, in Spring, repents of her Coldness

Now, when it flowereth,
 And when the banks and fields
 Are greener every day,
 And sweet is each bird's breath,
 In the tree where he builds
 Singing after his way,—
 Spring comes to us with hasty step and brief,
 Everywhere in leaf,
 And everywhere makes people laugh and play.

Love is brought unto me
 In the scent of the flower
 And in the bird's blithe noise.
 When day begins to be,
 I hear in every bower
 New verses finding voice :
 From every branch around me and above,
 A minstrels' court of love,
 The birds contend in song about love's joys.

What time I hear the lark
 And nightingale keep Spring,
 My heart will pant and yearn
 For love. (Ye all may mark
 The unkindly comforting
 Of fire that will not burn.)
 And, being in the shadow of the fresh wood,
 How excellently good
 A thing love is, I cannot choose but learn.

Let me ask grace ; for I,
 Being loved, loved not again.
 Now springtime makes me love,
 And bids me satisfy
 The lover whose fierce pain
 I thought too lightly of :
 For that the pain is fierce I do feel now.
 And yet this pride is slow
 To free my heart, which pity would fain move.

Wherefore I pray thee, Love,
 That thy breath turn me o'er,
 Even as the wind a leaf ;
 And I will set thee above
 This heart of mine, that's sore
 Perplexed, to be its chief.
 Let also the dear youth, whose passion must
 Henceforward have good trust,
 Be happy without words ; for words bring grief,

JACOPO DA LENTINO

I

SONNET

Of his Lady in Heaven

I HAVE it in my heart to serve God so
 That into Paradise I shall repair,—
 The holy place through the which everywhere
 I have heard say that joy and solace flow.
 Without my lady I were loth to go,—
 She who has the bright face and the bright hair ;
 Because if she were absent, I being there,
 My pleasure would be less than nought, I know.
 Look you, I say not this to such intent
 As that I there would deal in any sin :
 I only would behold her gracious mien,
 And beautiful soft eyes, and lovely face,
 That so it should be my complete content
 To see my lady joyful in her place.

II

CANZONETTA

Of his Lady, and of her Portrait

MARVELLOUSLY elate,
 Love makes my spirit warm
 With noble sympathies :
 As one whose mind is set
 Upon some glorious form,
 To paint it as it is ;—
 I verily who bear
 Thy face at heart, most fair,
 Am like to him in this.

Not outwardly declared,
 Within me dwells enclosed
 Thine image as thou art.
 Ah ! strangely hath it fared !
 I know not if thou know'st
 The love within my heart.
 Exceedingly afraid,
 My hope I have not said,
 But gazed on thee apart.

Because desire was strong,
 I made a portraiture
 In thine own likeness, love :
 When absence has grown long,
 I gaze, till I am sure
 That I behold thee move ;
 As one who purposeth
 To save himself by faith,
 Yet sees not, nor can prove.

Then comes the burning pain :
 As with the man that hath
 A fire within his breast,—
 When most he struggles, then
 Most boils the flame in wrath,
 And will not let him rest.
 So still I burned and shook,
 To pass, and not to look
 In thy face, loveliest,

For where thou art I pass,
 And do not lift mine eyes,
 Lady, to look on thee :
 But, as I go, alas !
 With bitterness of sighs
 I mourn exceedingly.
 Alas ! the constant woe !
 Myself I do not know,
 So sore it troubles me,

And I have sung thy praise,
 Lady, and many times
 Have told thy beauties o'er.
 Hast heard in anyways,
 Perchance, that these my rhymes
 Are song-craft and no more ?
 Nay, rather deem, when thou
 Shalt see me pass and bow,
 These words I sicken for.

Delicate song of mine,
 Go sing thou a new strain :
 Seek, with the first sunshine,
 Our lady, mine and thine,—
 The rose of Love's domain,
 Than red gold comelier.
 "Lady, in Love's name hark
 To Jacopo the clerk,
 Born in Lentino here."

III

SONNET

No Jewel is worth his Lady

SAPPHIRE, nor diamond, nor emerald,
 Nor other precious stones past reckoning,
 Topaz, nor pearl, nor ruby like a king,
 Nor that most virtuous jewel, jasper call'd,
 Nor amethyst, nor onyx, nor basalt,
 Each counted for a very marvellous thing,
 Is half so excellently gladdening
 As is my lady's head uncoronall'd.
 All beauty by her beauty is made dim ;
 Like to the stars she is for loftiness ;
 And with her voice she taketh away grief.
 She is fairer than a bud, or than a leaf.
 Christ have her well in keeping, of His grace,
 And make her holy, and beloved, like Him !

IV

CANZONETTA

He will neither boast nor lament to his Lady

LOVE will not have me cry
 For grace, as others do ;
 Nor as they vaunt, that I
 Should vaunt my love to you.
 For service, such as all
 Can pay, is counted small ;
 Nor is it much to praise
 The thing which all must know ;—
 Such pittance to bestow
 On you my love gainsays.

Love lets me not turn shape
 As chance or use may strike ;
 As one may see an ape
 Counterfeit all alike.
 Then, lady, unto you
 Be it not mine to sue
 For grace or pitying.
 Many the lovers be
 That of such suit are free,—
 It is a common thing.

A gem, the more 'tis rare,
 The more its cost will mount :
 And, be it not so fair,
 It is of more account.
 So, coming from the East,
 The sapphire is increased
 In worth, though scarce so bright ;
 I therefore seek thy face
 Not to solicit grace,
 Being cheapened and made slight.

So is the colosmine
 Now cheapened, which in fame
 Was once so brave and fine,
 But now is a mean gem.
 So be such prayers for grace
 Not heard in any place ;
 Would they indeed hold fast
 Their worth, be they not said,
 Nor by true lovers made
 Before nine years be past.

Lady, sans sigh or groan,
 My longing thou canst see ;
 Much better am I known
 Than to myself, to thee,
 And is there nothing else
 That in my heart avails
 For love but groan and sigh ?
 And wilt thou have it thus,
 This love betwixen us ?—
 Much rather let me die.

V

CANZONETTA

Of his Lady, and of his making her Likeness

My Lady mine,* I send
These sighs in joy to thee ;
Though, loving till the end,
There were no hope for me
That I should speak my love ;
And I have loved indeed,
Though, having fearful heed,
It was not spoken of.

Thou art so high and great
That whom I love I fear ;
Which thing to circumstate
I have no messenger :
Wherefore to Love I pray,
On whom each lover cries,
That these my tears and sighs
Find unto thee a way.

Well have I wished, when I
At heart with sighs have ach'd,
That there were in each sigh
Spirit and intellect,
The which, where thou dost sit,
Should kneel and sue for aid,
Since I am thus afraid
And have no strength for it.

Thou, lady, killest me,
Yet keepest me in pain,
For thou must surely see
How, fearing, I am fain.
Ah ! why not send me still
Some solace, small and slight,
So that I should not quite
Despair of thy good will ?

Thy grace, all else above,
Even now while I implore,
Enamoureth my love
To love thee still the more.
Yet scarce should I know well—
A greater love to gain,
Even if a greater pain,
Lady, were possible.

Joy did that day relax
My grief's continual stress,
When I essayed in wax
Thy beauty's life-likeness.
Ah ! much more beautiful
Than golden-haired Yseult,—
Who mak'st all men exult,
Who bring'st all women dule.

* Madonna mia.

And certes without blame
 Thy love might fall to me,
 Though it should chance my name
 Were never heard of thee.
 Yea, for thy love, in fine,
 Lentino gave me birth,
 Who am not nothing worth
 If worthy to be thine.

VI

SONNET

Of his Lady's face

HER face has made my life most proud and glad;
 Her face has made my life quite wearisome;
 It comforts me when other troubles come,
 And amid other joys it strikes me sad.
 Truly I think her face can drive me mad;
 For now I am too loud, and anon dumb.
 There is no second face in Christendom
 Has a like power, nor shall have, nor has had.
 What man in living face has seen such eyes,
 Or such a lovely bending of the head,
 Or mouth that opens to so sweet a smile?
 In speech, my heart before her faints and dies,
 And into Heaven seems to be spirited;
 So that I count me blest a certain while.

VII

CANZONE

At the end of his Hope

REMEMBERING this—how Love
 Mocks me, and bids me hoard
 Mine ill reward that keeps me nigh to death,—
 How it doth still behove
 I suffer the keen sword,
 Whence undeplor'd I may not draw my breath;
 In memory of this thing
 Sighing and sorrowing,
 I am languid at the heart
 For her to whom I bow,
 Craving her pity now,
 And who still turns apart.

I am dying, and through her—
 This flower, from paradise
 Sent in some wise, that I might have no rest.
 Truly she did not err
 To come before his eyes
 Who fails and dies, by her sweet smile possess'd;
 For, through her countenance
 (Fair brows and lofty glance!)
 I live in constant dule.
 Of lovers' hearts the chief
 For sorrow and much grief,
 My heart is sorrowful.

For Love has made me weep
 With sighs that do him wrong,
 Since, when most strong my joy, he gave this woe.
 I am broken, as a ship
 Perishing of the song,
 Sweet, sweet and long, the songs the sirens know.
 The mariner forgets,
 Voyaging in those straits,
 And dies assuredly.
 Yea, from her pride perverse,
 Who hath my heart as hers,
 Even such my death must be.

I deemed her not so fell
 And hard but she would greet,
 From her high seat, at length, the love I bring;
 For I have loved her well;—
 Nor that her face so sweet
 In so much heat would keep me languishing;
 Seeing that she I serve
 All honour doth deserve
 For worth unparallel'd;
 Yet what availeth moan
 But for more grief alone?
 O God! that it avail'd!

Thou, my new song, shalt pray
 To her, who for no end
 Each day doth tend her virtues that they grow,—
 Since she to love saith nay;—
 (More charms she had attain'd
 Than sea hath sand, and wisdom even so);—
 Pray thou to her that she
 For my love pity me,
 Since with my love I burn,—
 That of the fruit of love,
 While help may come thereof,
 She give to me in turn.

MAZZEO DI RICCO, DA MESSINA

I

CANZONE

He solicits his Lady's Pity

THE lofty worth and lovely excellence,
 Dear lady, that thou hast,
 Hold me consuming in the fire of love:
 That I am much afeared and wildered thence,
 As who, being meanly plac'd,
 Would win unto some height he dreameth of.
 Yet, if it be decreed,
 After the multiplying of vain thought,
 By Fortune's favour he at last is brought
 To his far hope, the mighty bliss indeed,

Thus, in considering thy loveliness,
 Love maketh me afear'd,—
 So high art thou, joyful, and full of good ;—
 And all the more, thy scorn being never less.
 Yet is this comfort heard,—
 That underneath the water fire doth brood,
 Which thing would seem unfit
 By law of nature. So may thy scorn prove
 Changed at the last, through pity into love,
 If favourable Fortune should permit.

Lady, though I do love past utterance,
 Let it not seem amiss,
 Neither rebuke thou the enamoured eyes.
 Look thou thyself on thine own countenance,
 From that charm unto this,
 All thy perfections of sufficiencies.
 So shalt thou rest assured
 That thine exceeding beauty lures me on
 Perforce, as by the passive magnet-stone
 The needle, of its nature's self, is lured.

Certes, it was of Love's despiteousness
 That I must set my life
 On thee, proud lady, who accept'st it not.
 And how should I attain unto thy grace,
 That falter, thus at strife
 To speak to thee the thing which is my thought ?
 Thou, lovely as thou art,
 I pray for God, when thou dost pass me by,
 Look upon me : so shalt thou certify,
 By my cheek's ailing, that which ails my heart.

So thoroughly my love doth tend toward
 Thy love its lofty scope,
 That I may never think to ease my pain ;
 Because the ice, when it is frozen hard,
 May have no further hope
 That it should ever become snow again.
 But, since Love bids me bend
 Unto thy seigniory,
 Have pity thou on me,
 That so upon thyself all grace descend.

II

CANZONE

After Six Years' service he renounces his Lady

I LABOURED these six years
 For thee, thou bitter sweet ;
 Yea, more than it is meet
 That speech should now rehearse
 Or song should rhyme to thee ;
 But love gains never aught
 From thee, by depth or length ;
 Unto thine eyes such strength
 And calmness thou hast taught,
 That I say wearily :—
 " The child is most like me,
 Who thinks in the clear stream
 To catch the round flat moon
 And draw it all a-dripping unto him,—
 Who fancies he can take into his hand
 The flame o' the lamp, but soon
 Screams and is nigh to swoon
 At the sharp heat his flesh may not withstand."

Though it be late to learn
 How sore I was possest,
 Yet do I count me blest,
 Because I still can spurn
 This thrall which is so mean.
 For when a man, once sick,
 Has got his health anew,
 The fever which boiled through
 His veins, and made him weak,
 Is as it had not been.
 For all that I had seen,
 Thy spirit, like thy face,
 More excellently shone
 Than precious crystals in an untrod place.
 Go to : thy worth is but as glass, the cheat,
 Which, to gaze thereupon,
 Seems crystal, even as one,
 But only is a cunning counterfeit.

Foiled hope has made me mad,
 As one who, playing high,
 Thought to grow rich thereby,
 And loses what he had.
 Yet I can now perceive
 How true the saying is
 That says : " If one turn back
 Out of an evil track
 Through loss which has been his,
 He gains, and need not grieve."
 To me now, by your leave,
 It chances as to him
 Who of his purse is free
 To one whose memory for such debts is dim.
 Long time he speaks no word thereof, being loth :
 But having asked, when he
 Is answered slightly,
 Then shall he lose his patience and be wroth.

III

SONNET

Of Self-seeing

IF any his own foolishness might see
 As he can see his fellow's foolishness,
 His evil speakings could not but prove less,
 For his own fault would vex him inwardly.
 But, by old custom, each man deems that he
 Has to himself all this world's worthiness;
 And thou, perchance, in blind contentedness,
 Scorn'st *him*, yet know'st not what *I* think of *thee*.
 Wherefore I wish it were so ordered
 That each of us might know the good that's his,
 And also the ill,—his honour and his shame.
 For oft a man has on his proper head
 Such weight of sins, that, did he know but this,
 He could not for his life give others blame,

PANNUCCIO DAL BAGNO, PISANO

CANZONE

Of his Change through Love

MY lady, thy delightful high command,
 Thy wisdom's great intent,
 The worth which ever rules thee in thy sway,
 (Whose righteousness of strength hath ta'en in hand
 Such full accomplishment
 As height makes worthy of more height alway,)
 Have granted to thy servant some poor due
 Of thy perfection; who
 From them has gained a proper will so fix'd,
 With other thought unmix'd,
 That nothing save thy service now impels
 His life, and his heart longs for nothing else.

Beneath thy pleasure, lady mine, I am :
 The circuit of my will,
 The force of all my life, to serve thee so :
 Never but only this I think or name,
 Nor ever can I fill
 My heart with other joy that man may know.
 And hence a sovereign blessedness I draw,
 Who soon most clearly saw
 That not alone my perfect pleasure is
 In this my life-service :
 But Love has made my soul with thine to touch
 Till my heart feels unworthy of so much,

For all that I could strive, it were not worth
 That I should be uplift
 Into thy love, as certainly I know :
 Since one to thy deserving should stretch forth
 His love for a free gift,
 And be full fain to serve and sit below.
 And forasmuch as this is verity,
 It came to pass with thee
 That seeing how my love was not loud-tongued
 Yet for thy service long'd—
 As only thy pure wisdom brought to pass,—
 Thou knew'st my heart for only what it was.

Also because thou thus at once didst learn
 This heart of mine and thine,
 With all its love for thee, which was and is ;
 Thy lofty sense that could so well discern
 Wrought even in me some sign
 Of thee, and of itself some emphasis,
 Which evermore might hold my purpose fast.
 For lo ! thy law is pass'd
 That this my love should manifestly be
 To serve and honour thee :
 And so I do : and my delight is full,
 Accepted for the servant of thy rule.

Without almost, I am all rapturous,
 Since thus my will was set
 To serve, thou flower of joy, thine excellence :
 Nor ever seems it anything could rouse
 A pain or a regret,
 But on thee dwells mine every thought and sense ;
 Considering that from thee all virtues spread
 As from a fountain-head,—
 That in thy gift is wisdom's best avail
 And honour without fail ;
 With whom each sovereign good dwells separate,
 Fulfilling the perfection of thy state.

Lady, since I conceived
 Thy pleasurable aspect in my heart,
 My life has been apart
 In shining brightness and the place of truth ;
 Which till that time, good sooth,
 Groped among shadows in a darken'd place
 Where many hours and days
 It hardly ever had remembered good.
 But now my servitude
 Is thine, and I am full of joy and rest.
 A man from a wild beast
 Thou madest me, since for thy love I lived.

GIACOMINO PUGLIESI, KNIGHT OF PRATO

I

CANZONETTA

Of his Lady in Absence

THE sweetly-favoured face
 She has, and her good cheer,
 Have filled me full of grace
 When I have walked with her.
 They did upon that day :
 And everything that pass'd
 Comes back from first to last
 Now that I am away.

There went from her meek mouth
 A poor low sigh which made
 My heart sink down for drouth.
 She stooped, and sobbed, and said,
 " Sir, I entreat of you
 Make little tarrying :
 It is not a good thing
 To leave one's love and go."

But when I turned about
 Saying, " God keep you well !"
 As she look'd up, I thought
 Her lips that were quite pale
 Strove much to speak, but she
 Had not half strength enough :
 My own dear graceful love
 Would not let go of me.

I am not so far, sweet maid,
 That now the old love's unfelt :
 I believe Tristram had
 No such love for Yseult :
 And when I see your eyes
 And feel your breath again,
 I shall forget this pain
 And my whole heart will rise.

II

CANZONETTA

To his Lady, in Spring

To see the green returning
 To stream-side, garden, and meadow,—
 To hear the birds give warning,
 (The laughter of sun and shadow
 Awaking them full of revel,)
 It puts me in strength to carol
 A music measured and level,
 This grief in joy to apparel ;
 For the deaths of lovers are evil.

Love is a foolish riot,
 And to be loved is a burden ;
 Who loves and is loved in quiet
 Has all the world for his guerdon.
 Ladies on him take pity
 Who for their sake hath trouble :
 Yet, if any heart be a city
 From love embarrèd double,
 Thereof is a joyful ditty.

That heart shall be always joyful ;—
 But I in the heart, my lady,
 Have jealous doubts unlawful,
 And stubborn pride stands ready.
 Yet love is not with a measure,
 But still is willing to suffer
 Service at his good pleasure :
 The whole Love hath to offer
 Tends to his perfect treasure.

Thine be this prelude-music
 That was of thy commanding ;
 Thy gaze was not delusive,—
 Of my heart thou hadst understanding.
 Lady, by thine attemp'rance
 Thou heldst my life from pining :
 This tress thou gav'st, in semblance
 Like gold of the third refining,
 Which I do keep for remembrance.

III

CANZONE

Of his dead Lady

DEATH, why hast thou made life so hard to bear,
 Taking my lady hence ? Hast thou no whit
 Of shame ? The youngest flower and the most fair
 Thou hast plucked away, and the world wanteth it.
 O leaden Death, hast thou no pitying ?
 Our warm love's very spring
 Thou stopp'st, and endest what was holy and meet ;
 And of my gladdening
 Mak'st a most woful thing,
 And in my heart dost bid the bird not sing
 That sang so sweet.

Once the great joy and solace that I had
 Was more than is with other gentlemen :—
 Now is my love gone hence, who made me glad.
 With her that hope I lived in she hath ta'en
 And left me nothing but these sighs and tears,—
 Nothing of the old years
 That come not back again,
 Wherein I was so happy, being hers.
 Now to mine eyes her face no more appears,
 Nor doth her voice make music in mine ears,
 As it did then.

DANTE AND HIS CIRCLE

O God, why hast thou made my grief so deep?
 Why set me in the dark to grope and pine?
 Why parted me from her companionship,
 And crushed the hope which was a gift of thine?
 To think, dear, that I never any more
 Can see thee as before!
 Who is it shuts thee in?
 Who hides that smile for which my heart is sore,
 And drowns those words that I am longing for,
 Lady of mine?

Where is my lady, and the lovely face
 She had, and the sweet motion when she walk'd?—
 Her chaste, mild favour—her so delicate grace—
 Her eyes, her mouth, and the dear way she talk'd?—
 Her courteous bending—her most noble air—
 The soft fall of her hair?
 My lady—she who to my soul so rare
 A gladness brought!
 Now I do never see her anywhere,
 And may not, looking in her eyes, gain there
 The blessing which I sought.

So if I had the realm of Hungary,
 With Greece, and all the Almayn even to France,
 Or Saint Sophia's treasure-hoard, you see
 All could not give me back her countenance.
 For since the day when my dear lady died
 From us, (with God being born and glorified,)
 No more pleasaunce
 Her image bringeth, seated at my side,
 But only tears. Ay me! the strength and pride
 Which it brought once.

Had I my will, beloved, I would say
 To God, unto whose bidding all things bow,
 That we were still together night and day:
 Yet be it done as His behests allow.
 I do remember that while she remain'd
 With me, she often called me her sweet friend;
 But does not now,
 Because God drew her towards Him, in the end.
 Lady, that peace which none but He can send
 Be thine. Even so.

FRA GUITTONE D'AREZZO

SONNET

To the Blessed Virgin Mary

LADY of Heaven, the mother glorified
 Of glory, which is Jesus,—He whose death
 Us from the gates of Hell delivereth
 And our first parents' error sets aside:—
 Behold this earthly Love, how his darts glide—
 How sharpened—to what fate—throughout this earth!
 Pitiful Mother, partner of our birth,
 Win these from following where his flight doth guide.

And O, inspire in me that holy love
 Which leads the soul back to its origin,
 Till of all other love the link do fail.
 This water only can this fire reprove,—
 Only such cure suffice for suchlike sin ;
 As nail from out a plank is struck by nail.

BARTOLOMEO DI SANT' ANGELO

SONNET

He jests concerning his Poverty

I AM so passing rich in poverty
 That I could furnish forth Paris and Rome,
 Pisa and Padua and Byzantium,
 Venice and Lucca, Florence and Forlì ;
 For I possess in actual specie,
 Of nihil and of nothing a great sum ;
 And unto this my hoard whole shiploads come,
 What between nought and zero, annually.
 In gold and precious jewels I have got
 A hundred ciphers' worth, all roundly writ ;
 And therewithal am free to feast my friend.
 Because I need not be afraid to spend,
 Nor doubt the safety of my wealth a whit :—
 No thief will ever steal thereof, God wot.

SALADINO DA PAVIA

DIALOGUE

Lover and Lady

SHE

FAIR sir, this love of ours,
 In joy begun so well,
 I see at length to fail upon thy part :
 Wherefore my heart sinks very heavily.
 Fair sir, this love of ours
 Began with amorous longing, well I ween :
 Yea, of one mind, yea, of one heart and will
 This love of ours hath been.
 Now these are sad and still ;
 For on thy part at length it fails, I see.
 And now thou art gone from me,
 Quite lost to me thou art ;
 Wherefore my heart in this pain languisheth,
 Which sinks it unto death thus heavily.

HE

Lady, for will of mine
 Our love had never changed in anywise,
 Had not the choice been thine
 With so much scorn my homage to despise.
 I swore not to yield sign
 Of holding 'gainst all hope my heart-service.
 Nay, let thus much suffice :—
 From thee whom I have serv'd,
 All undeserved contempt is my reward,—
 Rich prize prepar'd to guerdon fealty !

DANTE AND HIS CIRCLE

SHE

Fair sir, it oft is found
 That ladies who would try their lovers so,
 Have for a season frown'd,
 Not from their heart but in mere outward show.
 Then chide not on such ground,
 Since ladies oft have tried their lovers so.
 Alas, but I will go,
 If now it be thy will.
 Yet turn thee still, alas! for I do fear
 Thou lov'st elsewhere, and therefore fly'st from me.

HE

Lady, there needs no doubt
 Of my good faith, nor any nice suspense
 Lest love be elsewhere sought.
 For thine did yield me no such recompense,—
 Rest thou assured in thought,—
 That now, within my life's circumference,
 I should not quite dispense
 My heart from woman's laws,
 Which for no cause give pain and sore annoy,
 And for one joy a world of misery.

BONAGGIUNTA URBICIANI, DA LUCCA

I

CANZONE

Of the true End of Love; with a Prayer to his Lady

NEVER was joy or good that did not soothe
 And beget glorying,
 Neither a glorying without perfect love.
 Wherefore, if one would compass of a truth
 The flight of his soul's wing,
 To bear a loving heart must him behove.
 Since from the flower man still expects the fruit,
 And, out of love, that he desireth;
 Seeing that by good faith
 Alone hath love its comfort and its joy;
 For, suffering falsehood, love were at the root
 Dead of all worth, which living must aspire;
 Nor could it breed desire
 If its reward were less than its annoy.

Even such the joy, the triumph, and pleasaunce,
 Whose issue honour is,
 And grace, and the most delicate teaching sent
 To amorous knowledge, its inheritance;
 Because Love's properties
 Alter not by a true accomplishment;
 But it were scarcely well if one should gain
 Without much pain so great a blessedness;
 He errs, when all things bless,
 Whose heart had else been humbled to implore.
 He gets not joy who gives no joy again;
 Nor can win love whose love hath little scope;
 Nor fully can know hope
 Who leaves not of the thing most languished for.

Wherefore his choice must err immeasurably
 Who seeks the image when
 He might behold the thing substantial.
 I at the noon have seen dark night to be,
 Against earth's natural plan,
 And what was good to worst abasement fall.
 Then be thus much sufficient, lady mine;
 If of thy mildness pity may be born,
 Count thou my grief outworn,
 And turn into sweet joy this bitter ill;
 Lest I might change, if left too long to pine:
 As one who, journeying, in mid path should stay,
 And not pursue his way,
 But should go back against his proper will.

Natheless I hope, yea trust, to make an end
 Of the beginning made,
 Even by this sign—that yet I triumph not.
 And if in truth, against my will constrain'd,
 To turn my steps essay'd,
 No courage have I, neither strength, God wot.
 Such is Love's rule, who thus subdueth me
 By thy sweet face, lovely and delicate;
 Through which I live elate,
 But in such longing that I die for love.
 Ah! and these words as nothing seem to be:
 For love to such a constant fear has chid
 My heart that I keep hid
 Much more than I have dared to tell thee of.

II

CANZONETTA

How he dreams of his Lady

LADY, my wedded thought,
 When to thy shape 'tis wrought,
 Can think of nothing else
 But only of thy grace,
 And of those gentle ways
 Wherein thy life excels.
 For ever, sweet one, dwells
 Thine image on my sight,
 (Even as it were the gem
 Whose name is as thy name) *
 And fills the sense with light.

Continual ponderings
 That brood upon these things
 Yield constant agony:
 Yea, the same thoughts have crept
 About me as I slept.
 My spirit looks at me,
 And asks, "Is sleep for thee?
 Nay, mourner, do not sleep,
 But fix thine eyes, for lo!
 Love's fulness thou shalt know
 By steadfast gaze and deep."

* The lady was probably called Diamante, Margherita, or some similar name. (Note to Flor. Ed. 1816).

Then, burning, I awake,
 Sore tempted to partake
 Of dreams that seek thy sight :
 Until, being greatly stirr'd,
 I turn to where I heard
 That whisper in the night ;
 And there a breath of light
 Shines like a silver star.
 The same is mine own soul,
 Which lures me to the goal
 Of dreams that gaze afar.

But now my sleep is lost ;
 And through this uttermost
 Sharp longing for thine eyes
 At length it may be said
 That I indeed am mad
 With love's extremities.
 Yet when in such sweet wise
 Thou passest and dost smile,
 My heart so fondly burns,
 That unto sweetness turns
 Its bitter pang the while.

Even so Love rends apart
 My spirit and my heart,
 Lady, in loving thee ;
 Till when I see thee now,
 Life beats within my brow
 And would be gone from me.
 So hear I ceaselessly,
 Love's whisper well fulfill'd—
 Even I am he, even so,
 Whose flame thy heart doth know :
 And while I strive I yield.

III

SONNET

Of Wisdom and Foresight

SUCH wisdom as a little child displays
 Were not amiss in certain lords of fame :
 For where he fell, thenceforth he shuns the place,
 And having suffered blows, he feareth them.
 Who knows not this may forfeit all he sways
 At length, and find his friends go as they came.
 O therefore on the past time turn thy face,
 And, if thy will do err, forget the same.
 Because repentance brings not back the past :
 Better thy will should bend than thy life break :
 Who owns not this, by him shall it appear.
 And, because even from fools the wise may make
 Wisdom, the first should count himself the last,
 Since a dog scourged can bid the lion fear,

IV

SONNET

Of Continence in Speech

WHOSO abandons peace for war-seeking,
 'Tis of all reason he should bear the smart.
 Whoso hath evil speech, his medicine
 Is silence, lest it seem a hateful art.
 To vex the wasps' nest is not a wise thing;
 Yet who rebukes his neighbour in good part,
 A hundred years shall show his right therein.
 Too prone to fear, one wrongs another's heart.
 If ye but knew what may be known to me,
 Ye would fall sorry sick, nor be thus bold
 To cry among your fellows your ill thought.
 Wherefore I would that every one of ye
 Who thinketh ill, his ill thought should withhold:
 If that ye would not hear it, speak it not.

MEO ABBRACCIACCA, DA PISTOIA

I

CANZONE

He will be silent and watchful in his Love

YOUR joyful understanding, lady mine,
 Those honours of fair life
 Which all in you agree to pleasantness,
 Long since to service did my heart assign;
 That never it has strife,
 Nor once remembers other means of grace;
 But this desire alone gives light to it.
 Behold, my pleasure, by your favour, drew
 Me, lady, unto you,
 All beauty's and all joy's reflection here:
 From whom good women also have thought fit
 To take their life's example every day;
 Whom also to obey
 My wish and will have wrought, with love and fear.

With love and fear to yield obedience, I
 Might never half deserve:
 Yet you must know, merely to look on me,
 How my heart holds its love and lives thereby;
 Though, well intent to serve,
 It can accept Love's arrow silently.
 'Twere late to wait, ere I would render plain
 My heart, (thus much I tell you, as I should,)

Which, to be understood,
 Craves therefore the fine quickness of your glance.
 So shall you know my love of such high strain
 As never yet was shown by its own will;
 Whose proffer is so still,
 That love in heart hates love in countenance.

In countenance oft the heart is evident
 Full clad in mirth's attire,
 Wherein at times it overweens to waste :
 Which yet of selfish joy or foul intent
 Doth hide the deep desire,
 And is, of heavy surety, double-faced ;
 Upon things double therefore look ye twice.
 O ye that love ! not what is fair alone
 Desire to make your own,
 But a wise woman, fair in purity ;
 Nor think that any, without sacrifice
 Of his own nature, suffers service still ;
 But out of high free-will ;
 In honour propped, though bowed in dignity.

In dignity as best I may, must I
 The guerdon very grand,
 The whole of it, secured in purpose, sing ?
 Lady, whom all my heart doth magnify,
 You took me in your hand,
 Ah ! not ungraced with other guerdoning :
 For you of your sweet reason gave me rest
 From yearning, from desire, from potent pain ;
 Till, now, if Death should gain
 Me to his kingdom, it would pleasure me,
 Having obeyed the whole of your behest.
 Since you have drawn, and I am yours by lot,
 I pray you doubt me not
 Lest my faith swerve, for this could never be.

Could never be ; because the natural heart
 Will absolutely build
 Her dwelling-place within the gates of truth ;
 And, if it be no grief to bear her part,
 Why, then by change were fill'd
 The measure of her shame beyond all truth.
 And therefore no delay shall once disturb
 My bounden service, nor bring grief to it ;
 Nor unto you deceit.
 True virtue her provision first affords,
 Ere she yield grace, lest afterward some curb
 Or check should come, and evil enter in :
 For alway shame and sin
 Stand covered, ready, full of faithful words.

II

BALLATA

His Life is by Contraries

By the long sojourning
 That I have made with grief,
 I am quite changed, you see ;—
 If I weep, 'tis for glee ;
 I smile at a sad thing ;
 Despair is my relief.

Good hap makes me afraid ;
 Ruin seems rest and shade ;
 In May the year is old ;
 With friends I am ill at ease ;
 Among foes I find peace ;
 At noonday I feel cold.

The thing that strengthens others, frightens me.
 If I am grieved, I sing ;
 I chafe at comforting ;
 Ill fortune makes me smile exultingly.

And yet, though all my days are thus,—despite
 A shaken mind, and eyes
 Which see by contraries,—
 I know that without wings is an ill flight.

UBALDO DI MARCO

SONNET

Of a Lady's Love for him

My body resting in a haunt of mine,
 I ranged among alternate memories ;
 What while an unseen noble lady's eyes
 Were fixed upon me, yet she gave no sign ;
 To stay and go she sweetly did incline,
 Always afraid lest there were any spies ;
 Then reached to me,—and smelt it in sweet wise,
 And reached to me—some sprig of bloom or bine.
 Conscious of perfume, on my side I leant,
 And rose upon my feet, and gazed around
 To see the plant whose flower could so beguile.
 Finding it not, I sought it by the scent ;
 And by the scent, in truth, the plant I found,
 And rested in its shadow a great while.

SIMBUONO GIUDICE

CANZONE

He finds that Love has beguiled him, but will trust in his Lady

OFTEN the day had a most joyful morn
 That bringeth grief at last
 Unto the human heart which deemed all well :
 Of a sweet seed the fruit was often born
 That hath a bitter taste :
 Of mine own knowledge, oft it thus befell.
 I say it for myself, who, foolishly
 Expectant of all joy,
 Triumphant undertook
 To love a lady proud and beautiful,
 For one poor glance vouchsafed in mirth to me :
 Wherefrom sprang all annoy :
 For, since the day Love shook
 My heart, she ever hath been cold and cruel.

Well thought I to possess my joy complete
 When that sweet look of hers
 I felt upon me, amorous and kind :
 Now is my hope even underneath my feet.
 And still the arrow stirs
 Within my heart—(oh hurt no skill can bind!)—
 Which through mine eyes found entrance cunningly !
 In manner as through glass
 Light pierces from the sun,
 And breaks it not, but wins its way beyond,—
 As into an unaltered mirror, free
 And still, some shape may pass.
 Yet has my heart begun
 To break, methinks, for I on death grow fond.

But, even though death were longed for, the sharp wound
 I have might yet be heal'd,
 And I not altogether sink to death.
 In mine own foolishness the curse I found,
 Who foolish faith did yield
 Unto mine eyes, in hope that sickeneth.
 Yet might love still exult and not be sad—
 (For some such utterance
 Is at my secret heart)—
 If from herself the cure it could obtain,—
 Who hath indeed the power Achilles had,
 To wit, that of his lance
 The wound could by no art
 Be closed till it were touched therewith again.

So must I needs appeal for pity now
 From her on her own fault,
 And in my prayer put meek humility :
 For certes her much worth will not allow
 That anything be call'd
 Treacherousness in such an one as she,
 In whom is judgment and true excellence.
 Wherefore I cry for grace ;
 Not doubting that all good,
 Joy, wisdom, pity, must from her be shed ;
 For scarcely should it deal in death's offence,
 The so-belovèd face
 So watched for ; rather should
 All death and ill be thereby subjected.

And since, in hope of mercy, I have bent
 Unto her ordinance
 Humbly my heart, my body, and my life,
 Giving her perfect power acknowledgment,—
 I think some kinder glance
 She'll deign, and, in mere pity, pause from strife.
 She surely shall enact the good lord's part :
 When one whom force compels
 Doth yield, he is pacified,
 Forgiving him therein where he did err.
 Ah ! well I know she hath the noble heart
 Which in the lion quells
 Obduracy of pride ;
 Whose nobleness is for a crown on her.

MASOLINO DA TODI

SONNET

Of Work and Wealth

A MAN should hold in very dear esteem
 The first possession that his labours gain'd ;
 For, though great riches be at length attain'd,
 From that first mite they were increased to him.
 Who followeth after his own wilful whim
 Shall see himself outwitted in the end ;
 Wherefore I still would have him apprehend
 His fall, who toils not being once supreme.
 Thou seldom shalt find folly, of the worst,
 Holding companionship with poverty,
 Because it is distracted of much care.
 Howbeit, if one that hath been poor at first
 Is brought at last to wealth and dignity,
 Still the worst folly thou shalt find it there.

ONESTO DI BONCIMA, BOLOGNESE

I

SONNET

Of the Last Judgment

UPON that cruel season when our Lord
 Shall come to judge the world eternally ;
 When to no man shall anything afford
 Peace in the heart, how pure soe'er it be ;
 When heaven shall break asunder at His word,
 With a great trembling of the earth and sea ;
 When even the just shall fear the dreadful sword,—
 The wicked crying, " Where shall I cover me ?"—
 When no one angel in His presence stands
 That shall not be affrighted of that wrath,
 Except the Virgin Lady, she our guide ;—
 How shall I then escape, whom sin commands ?
 Out and alas on me ! There is no path,
 If in her prayers I be not justified.

II

SONNET

He wishes that he could meet his Lady alone

WHETHER all grace have failed I scarce may scan,
 Be it of mere mischance, or art's ill sway,
 That this-wise, Monday, Tuesday, every day,
 Afflicts me, through her means, with bale and ban.
 Now are my days but as a painful span ;
 Nor once " Take heed of dying " did she say.
 I thank thee for my life thus cast away,
 Thou who hast wearied out a living man.
 Yet, oh ! my Lord, if I were blest no more
 Than thus much,—clothed with thy humility,
 To find her for a single hour alone,—
 Such perfectness of joy would triumph o'er
 This grief wherein I waste, that I should be
 As a new image of Love to look upon.

TERINO DA CASTEL FIORENTINO

SONNET

To Onesto di Boncima, in Answer to the foregoing

IF, as thou say'st, thy love tormenteth thee,
 That thou thereby wast in the fear of death,
 Messer Onesto, couldst thou bear to be
 Far from Love's self, and breathing other breath?
 Nay, thou wouldst pass beyond the greater sea
 (I do not speak of the Alps, an easy path),
 For thy life's gladdening; if so to see
 That light which for *my* life no comfort hath,
 But rather makes my grief the bitterer:
 For I have neither ford nor bridge—no course
 To reach my lady, or send word to her.
 And there is not a greater pain, I think,
 Than to see waters at the limpid source,
 And to be much athirst, and not to drink.

MAESTRO MIGLIORE, DA FIORENZA

SONNET

He declares all Love to be Grief

LOVE taking leave, my heart then leaveth me,
 And is enamour'd even while it would shun;
 For I have looked so long upon the sun
 That the sun's glory is now in all I see.
 To its first will unwilling may not be
 This heart (though by its will its death be won),
 Having remembrance of the joy forerun:
 Yea, all life else seems dying constantly.
 Ay and alas! in love is no relief,
 For any man who loveth in full heart,
 That is not rather grief than gratefulness.
 Whoso desires it, the beginning is grief;
 Also the end is grief, most grievous smart;
 And grief is in the middle, and is call'd grace.

DELLO DA SIGNA

BALLATA

His Creed of Ideal Love

PROHIBITING all hope
Of the fulfilment of the joy of love,
My lady chose me for her lover still.

So am I lifted up
To trust her heart which piteous pulses move,
Her face which is her joy made visible.

Nor have I any fear
Lest love and service should be met with scorn,
Nor doubt that thus I shall rejoice the more.

For ruth is born of prayer;
Also, of ruth delicious love is born;
And service wrought makes glad the servitor.

Behold, I, serving more than others, love
One lovely more than all:
And, singing and exulting, look for joy
There where my homage is for ever paid.

And, for I know she does not disapprove
If on her grace I call,
My soul's good trust I will not yet destroy,
Though Love's fulfilment stand prohibited.

FOLGORE DA SAN GEMINIANO

I

SONNET

To the Guelf Faction

BECAUSE ye made your backs your shields, it came
To pass, ye Guelfs, that these your enemies
From hares grew lions: and because your eyes
Turned homeward, and your spurs e'en did the same,
Full many an one who still might win the game
In fevered tracts of exile pines and dies.
Ye blew your bubbles as the falcon flies,
And the wind broke them up and scattered them.
This counsel, therefore. Shape your high resolves
In good King Robert's humour,* and afresh
Accept your shames, forgive, and go your way.
And so her peace is made with Pisa! Yea,
What cares she for the miserable flesh
That in the wilderness has fed the wolves?

* See what is said in allusion to his government of Florence by Dante (*Parad.* C. viii.).

II

SONNET

To the Same

WERE ye but constant, Guelfs, in war or peace,
 As in divisions ye are constant still !
 There is no wisdom in your stubborn will,
 Wherein all good things wane, all harms increase.
 But each upon his fellow looks, and sees
 And looks again, and likes his favour ill ;
 And traitors rule ye ; and on his own sill
 Each stirs the fire of household enmities.
 What, Guelfs ! and is Monte Catini * quite
 Forgot,—where still the mothers and sad wives
 Keep widowhood, and curse the Ghibellins ?
 O fathers, brothers, yea, all dearest kins !
 Those men of ye that cherish kindred lives
 Even once again must set their teeth and fight.

III

SONNET

Of Virtue

THE flower of Virtue is the heart's content ;
 And fame is Virtue's fruit that she doth bear ;
 And Virtue's vase is fair without and fair
 Within ; and Virtue's mirror brooks no taint ;
 And Virtue by her names is sage and saint ;
 And Virtue hath a steadfast front and clear ;
 And Love is Virtue's constant minister ;
 And Virtue's gift of gifts is pure descent.
 And Virtue dwells with knowledge, and therein
 Her cherished home of rest is real love ;
 And Virtue's strength is in a suffering will ;
 And Virtue's work is life exempt from sin,
 With arms that aid ; and in the sum hereof,
 All Virtue is to render good for ill.

* The battle of Monte Catini was fought and won by the Ghibelline leader, Ugucione della Faggiola, against the Florentines, August 29, 1315. This would seem to date Folgore's career further on than the period usually assigned to him (about 1260), and the question arises whether the above sonnet be really his.

OF THE MONTHS

TWELVE SONNETS

*Addressed to a Fellowship of Sienese Nobles **

DEDICATION

UNTO the blithe and lordly Fellowship,
 (I know not where, but wheresoe'er, I know,
 Lordly and blithe,) be greeting; and thereto,
 Dogs, hawks, and a full purse wherein to dip;
 Quails struck i' the flight; nags mettled to the whip;
 Hart-hounds, hare-hounds, and blood-hounds even so;
 And o'er that realm, a crown for Niccolò,
 Whose praise in Siena springs from lip to lip.
 Tingoccio, Atuin di Togno, and Ancaian,
 Bartolo and Mugaro and Faënot,
 Who well might pass for children of King Ban,
 Courteous and valiant more than Lancelot,—
 To each, God speed! how worthy every man
 To hold high tournament in Camelot.

JANUARY

FOR January I give you vests of skins,
 And mighty fires in hall, and torches lit;
 Chambers and happy beds with all things fit;
 Smooth silken sheets, rough furry counterpanes;
 And sweetmeats baked; and one that deftly spins
 Warm arras; and Douay cloth, and store of it;
 And on this merry manner still to twit
 The wind, when most his mastery the wind wins.
 Or issuing forth at seasons in the day,
 Ye'll fling soft handfuls of the fair white snow
 Among the damsels standing round, in play:
 And when you all are tired and all aglow,
 Indoors again the court shall hold its sway,
 And the free Fellowship continue so.

* This fellowship or club (*Brigata*), so highly approved and encouraged by our Folgore, is the same to which, and to some of its members by name, scornful allusion is made by Dante (*Inferno*, C. XXIX. l. 130), where he speaks of the hare-brained character of the Sienese. Mr. Cayley, in his valuable notes on Dante, says of it: "A dozen extravagant youths of Siena had put together by equal contributions 216,000 florins to spend in pleasuring; they were reduced in about a twelvemonth to the extremes of poverty. It was their practice to give mutual entertainments twice a-month; at each of which, three tables having been sumptuously covered, they would feast at one, wash their hands on another, and throw the last out of window."

There exists a second curious series of sonnets for the months, addressed also to this club, by Cene della Chitarra d'Arezzo. Here, however, all sorts of disasters and discomfords, in the same pursuits of which Folgore treats, are imagined for the prodigals; each sonnet, too, being composed with the same terminations in its rhymes as the corresponding one among his. They would seem to have been written after the ruin of the club, as a satirical prophecy of the year to succeed the golden one. But this second series, though sometimes laughable, not having the poetical merit of the first, I have not included it.

FEBRUARY

IN February I give you gallant sport
 Of harts and hinds and great wild boars ; and all
 Your company good foresters and tall,
 With buskins strong, with jerkins close and short ;
 And in your leashes, hounds of brave report ;
 And from your purses, plenteous money-fall,
 In very spleen of misers' starveling gall,
 Who at your generous customs snarl and snort.
 At dusk wend homeward, ye and all your folk,
 All laden from the wilds, to your carouse,
 With merriment and songs accompanied :
 And so draw wine and let the kitchen smoke ;
 And so be till the first watch glorious ;
 Then sound sleep to you till the day be wide.

MARCH

IN March I give you plenteous fisheries
 Of lamprey and of salmon, eel and trout,
 Dental and dolphin, sturgeon, all the rout
 Of fish in all the streams that fill the seas.
 With fishermen and fishing-boats at ease,
 Sail-barques and arrow-barques, and galleons stout,
 To bear you, while the season lasts, far out,
 And back, through spring, to any port you please.
 But with fair mansions see that it be fill'd,
 With everything exactly to your mind,
 And every sort of comfortable folk.
 No convent suffer there, nor priestly guild :
 Leave the mad monks to preach after their kind
 Their scanty truth, their lies beyond a joke.

APRIL

I GIVE you meadow-lands in April, fair
 With over-growth of beautiful green grass ;
 There among fountains the glad hours shall pass,
 And pleasant ladies bring you solace there.
 With steeds of Spain and ambling palfreys rare ;
 Provençal songs and dances that surpass ;
 And quaint French mumblings ; and through hollow brass
 A sound of German music on the air.
 And gardens ye shall have, that every one
 May lie at ease about the fragrant place ;
 And each with fitting reverence shall bow down
 Unto that youth to whom I gave a crown
 Of precious jewels like to those that grace
 The Babylonian Kaiser, Prester John.

MAY

I GIVE you horses for your games in May,
And all of them well trained unto the course,—
Each docile, swift, erect, a goodly horse ;
With armour on their chests, and bells at play
Between their brows, and pennons fair and gay ;
Fine nets, and housings meet for warriors,
Emblazoned with the shields ye claim for yours ;
Gules, argent, or, all dizzy at noonday.
And spears shall split, and fruit go flying up
In merry counterchange for wreaths that drop
From balconies and casements far above ;
And tender damsels with young men and youths
Shall kiss together on the cheeks and mouths ;
And every day be glad with joyful love.

JUNE

IN June I give you a close-wooded fell,
With crowns of thicket coiled about its head,
With thirty villas twelve times turreted,
All girdling round a little citadel ;
And in the midst a springhead and fair well
With thousand conduits branched and shining speed,
Wounding the garden and the tender mead,
Yet to the freshened grass acceptable.
And lemons, citrons, dates, and oranges,
And all the fruits whose savour is most rare,
Shall shine within the shadow of your trees ;
And every one shall be a lover there ;
Until your life, so filled with courtesies,
Throughout the world be counted debonair.

JULY

FOR July, in Siena, by the willow-tree,
I give you barrels of white Tuscan wine
In ice far down your cellars stored supine ;
And morn and eve to eat in company
Of those vast jellies dear to you and me ;
Of partridges and youngling pheasants sweet,
Boiled capons, sovereign kids : and let their treat
Be veal and garlic, with whom these agree.
Let time slip by, till by-and-by, all day ;
And never swelter through the heat at all,
But move at ease at home, sound, cool, and gay ;
And wear sweet-coloured robes that lightly fall ;
And keep your tables set in fresh array,
Not coaxing spleen to be your seneschal,

AUGUST

FOR August, be your dwelling thirty towers
 Within an Alpine valley mountainous,
 Where never the sea-wind may vex your house,
 But clear life separate, like a star, be yours.
 There horses shall wait saddled at all hours,
 That ye may mount at morning or at eve :
 On each hand either ridge ye shall perceive,
 A mile apart, which soon a good beast scours.
 So alway, drawing homewards, ye shall tread
 Your valley parted by a rivulet
 Which day and night shall flow sedate and smooth.
 There all through noon ye may possess the shade,
 And there your open purses shall entreat
 The best of Tuscan cheer to feed your youth.

SEPTEMBER

AND in September, O what keen delight !
 Falcons and astors, merlins, sparrowhawks ;
 Decoy-birds that shall lure your game in flocks ;
 And hounds with bells : and gauntlets stout and tight ;
 Wide pouches ; crossbows shooting out of sight ;
 Arblasts and javelins ; balls and ball-cases ;
 All birds the best to fly at ; moulting these,
 Those reared by hand ; with finches mean and slight ;
 And for their chase, all birds the best to fly ;
 And each to each of you be lavish still
 In gifts ; and robbery find no gainsaying ;
 And if you meet with travellers going by,
 Their purses from your purse's flow shall fill ;
 And avarice be the only outcast thing.

OCTOBER

NEXT, for October, to some sheltered coign
 Flouting the winds, I'll hope to find you slunk ;
 Though in bird-shooting (lest all sport be sunk),
 Your foot still press the turf, the horse your groin.
 At night with sweethearts in the dance you'll join,
 And drink the blessed must, and get quite drunk.
 There's no such life for any human trunk ;
 And that's a truth that rings like golden coin !
 Then, out of bed again when morning's come,
 Let your hands drench your face refreshingly,
 And take your physic roast, with flask and knife.
 Sounder and snugger you shall feel at home
 Than lake-fish, river-fish, or fish at sea,
 Inheriting the cream of Christian life.

NOVEMBER

LET baths and wine-butts be November's due,
 With thirty mule-loads of broad gold-pieces ;
 And canopy with silk the streets that freeze ;
 And keep your drink-horns steadily in view.
 Let every trader have his gain of you :
 Clareta shall your lamps and torches send,—
 Caëta, citron-candies without end ;
 And each shall drink, and help his neighbour to.
 And let the cold be great, and the fire grand :
 And still for fowls, and pastries sweetly wrought,
 For hares and kids, for roast and boiled, be sure
 You always have your appetites at hand ;
 And then let night howl and heaven fall, so nought
 Be missed that makes a man's bed-furniture.

DECEMBER

LAST, for December, houses on the plain,
 Ground-floors to live in, logs heaped mountain-high,
 And carpets stretched, and newest games to try,
 And torches lit, and gifts from man to man :
 (Your host, a drunkard and a Catalan ;)
 And whole dead pigs, and cunning cooks to ply
 Each throat with tit-bits that shall satisfy ;
 And wine-butts of Saint Galganus' brave span.
 And be your coats well-lined and tightly bound,
 And wrap yourselves in cloaks of strength and weight,
 With gallant hoods to put your faces through.
 And make your game of abject vagabond
 Abandoned miserable reprobate
 Misers ; don't let them have a chance with you.

CONCLUSION

AND now take thought, my sonnet, who is he
 That most is full of every gentleness ;
 And say to him (for thou shalt quickly guess
 His name) that all his 'hests are law to me.
 For if I held fair Paris town in fee,
 And were not called his friend, 'twere surely less.
 Ah ! had he but the emperor's wealth, my place
 Were fitted in his love more steadily
 Than is Saint Francis at Assisi. Always
 Commend him unto me and his,—not least
 To Caian, held so dear in the blithe band.
 "Folgore da San Geminiano" (say,)
 "Has sent me, charging me to travel fast,
 Because his heart went with you in your hand."

OF THE WEEK

SEVEN SONNETS

DEDICATION

THERE is among my thoughts the joyous plan
 To fashion a bright-jewelled carcanet,
 Which I upon such worthy brows would set,
 To say, it suits them fairly as it can.
 And now I have newly found a gentleman,
 Of courtesies and birth commensurate,
 Who better would become the imperial state
 Than fits the gem within the signet's span.
 Carlo di Messer Guerra Cavicciuli,*
 Of him I speak,—brave, wise, of just award
 And generous service, let who list command :
 And lithelier limbed than ounce or leopard.
 He holds not money-bags, as children, holy ;
 For Lombard Esté hath no freer hand.

MONDAY

The Day of Songs and Love

NOW with the moon the day-star Lucifer
 Departs, and night is gone at last, and day
 Brings, making all men's spirits strong and gay,
 A gentle wind to gladden the new air.
 Lo ! this is Monday, the week's harbinger ;
 Let music breathe her softest matin-lay,
 And let the loving damsels sing to-day,
 And the sun wound with heat at noontide here.
 And thou, young lord, arise and do not sleep,
 For now the amorous day inviteth thee
 The harvest of thy lady's youth to reap.
 Let coursers round the door, and palfreys, be,
 With squires and pages clad delightfully ;
 And Love's commandments have thou heed to keep.

TUESDAY

The Day of Battles

TO a new world on Tuesday shifts my song,
 Where beat of drum is heard, and trumpet-blast ;
 Where footmen armed and horsemen armed go past,
 And bells say ding to bells that answer dong ;
 Where he the first and after him the throng,
 Armed all of them with coats and hoods of steel,
 Shall see their foes and make their foes to feel,
 And so in wrack and rout drive them along.
 Then hither, thither, dragging on the field
 His master, empty-seated goes the horse,
 'Mid entrails strown abroad of soldiers kill'd ;
 Till blow to camp those trumpeters of yours
 Who noise awhile your triumph and are still'd,
 And to your tents you come back conquerors.

* That is, according to early Tuscan nomenclature, Carlo, the son of Messer Guerra Cavicciuli.

WEDNESDAY

The Day of Feasts

AND every Wednesday, as the swift days move,
 Pheasant and peacock-shooting out of doors
 You'll have, and multitude of hares to course,
 And after you come home, good cheer enough;
 And sweetest ladies at the board above,
 Children of kings and counts and senators;
 And comely-favoured youthful bachelors
 To serve them, bearing garlands, for true love.
 And still let cups of gold and silver ware,
 Runlets of vernage-wine and wine of Greece,
 Comfits and cakes be found at bidding there;
 And let your gifts of birds and game increase:
 And let all those who in your banquet share
 Sit with bright faces perfectly at ease.

THURSDAY

The Day of Jousts and Tournaments

FOR Thursday be the tournament prepar'd,
 And gentlemen in lordly jousts compete:
 First man with man, together let them meet,—
 By fifties and by hundreds afterward.
 Let arms with housings each be fitly pair'd,
 And fitly hold your battle to its heat
 From the third hour to vespers, after meat;
 Till the best-winded be at last declared.
 Then back unto your beauties, as ye came:
 Where upon sovereign beds, with wise control
 Of leaches, shall your hurts be swathed in bands.
 The ladies shall assist with their own hands,
 And each be so well paid in seeing them
 That on the morrow he be sound and whole.

FRIDAY

The Day of Hunting

LET Friday be your highest hunting-tide,—
 No hound nor brach nor mastiff absent thence,—
 Through a low wood, by many miles of dens,
 All covert, where the cunning beasts abide:
 Which now driven forth, at first you scatter wide,—
 Then close on them, and rip out blood and breath:
 Till all your huntsmen's horns wind at the death,
 And you count up how many beasts have died.
 Then, men and dogs together brought, you'll say:
 Go fairly greet from us this friend and that,
 Bid each make haste to blithest wassailings.
 Might not one vow that the whole pack had wings?
 What! hither, Beauty, Dian, Dragon, what!
 I think we held a royal hunt to-day.

SATURDAY

The Day of Hawking

I'VE jolliest merriment for Saturday :—
 The very choicest of all hawks to fly
 That crane or heron could be stricken by,
 As up and down you course the steep highway.
 So shall the wild geese, in your deadly play,
 Lose at each stroke a wing, a tail, a thigh ;
 And man with man and horse with horse shall vie,
 Till you all shout for glory and holiday.
 Then, going home, you'll closely charge the cook :
 " All this is for to-morrow's roast and stew.
 Skin, lop, and truss : hang pots on every hook.
 And we must have fine wine and white bread too,
 Because this time we mean to feast : so look
 We do not think your kitchens lost on you."

SUNDAY

The Day of Balls and Deeds of Arms in Florence

AND on the morrow, at first peep o' the day
 Which follows, and which men as Sunday spell,—
 Whom most him liketh, dame or damozel,
 Your chief shall choose out of the sweet array.
 So in the palace painted and made gay
 Shall he converse with her whom he loves best ;
 And what he wishes, his desire express'd
 Shall bring to presence there, without gainsay.
 And youths shall dance, and men do feats of arms,
 And Florence be sought out on every side
 From orchards and from vineyards and from farms :
 That they who fill her streets from far and wide
 In your fine temper may discern such charms
 As shall from day to day be magnified.

GUIDO DELLE COLONNE

CANZONE

To Love and to his Lady

O LOVE, who all this while hast urged me on,
 Shaking the reins, with never any rest,—
 Slacken for pity somewhat of thy haste ;
 I am oppress'd with languor and foredone,—
 Having outrun the power of sufferance,—
 Having much more endured than who, through faith
 That his heart holds, makes no account of death.
 Love is assuredly a fair mischance,
 And well may it be called a happy ill :
 Yet thou, my lady, on this constant sting,
 So sharp a thing, have thou some pity still,—
 Howbeit a sweet thing too, unless it kill.

O comely-favoured, whose soft eyes prevail,
More fair than is another on this ground,—
Lift now my mournful heart out of its stound,
Which thus is bound for thee in great travail:
For a high gale a little rain may end.
Also, my lady, be not angered thou
That Love should thee enforce, to whom all bow.
There is but little shame to apprehend
If to a higher strength the conquest be;
And all the more to Love who conquers all.
Why then appal my heart with doubts of thee?
Courage and patience triumph certainly.

I do not say that with such loveliness
Such pride may not beseem; it suits thee well;
For in a lovely lady pride may dwell,
Lest homage fail and high esteem grow less:
Yet pride's excess is not a thing to praise.
Therefore, my lady, let thy harshness gain
Some touch of pity which may still restrain
Thy hand, ere Death cut short these hours and days.
The sun is very high and full of light,
And the more bright the higher he doth ride:
So let thy pride, my lady, and thy height,
Stand me in stead and turn to my delight.

Still inmost I love thee, labouring still
That others may not know my secret smart.
Oh! what a pain it is for the grieved heart
To hold apart and not to show its ill!
Yet by no will the face can hide the soul;
And ever with the eyes the heart has need
To be in all things willingly agreed.
It were a mighty strength that should control
The heart's fierce beat, and never speak a word:
It were a mighty strength, I say again,
To hide such pain, and to be sovran lord
Of any heart that had such love to hoard.

For Love can make the wisest turn astray;
Love, at its most, of measure still has least;
He is the maddest man who loves the best;
It is Love's jest, to make men's hearts alway
So hot that they by coldness cannot cool.
The eyes unto the heart bear messages
Of the beginnings of all pain and ease:
And thou, my lady, in thy hand dost rule
Mine eyes and heart which thou hast made thine own.
Love rocks my life with tempests on the deep,
Even as a ship round which the winds are blown:
Thou art my pennon that will not go down.

PIER MORONELLI, DI FIORENZA

CANZONETTA

A bitter Song to his Lady

O LADY amorous,
 Merciless lady,
 Full blithely play'd ye
 These your beguilings.
 So with an urchin
 A man makes merry,—
 In mirth grows clamorous,
 Laughs and rejoices,—
 But when his choice is
 To fall aweary,
 Cheats him with silence.
 This is Love's portion :—
 In much wayfaring
 With many burdens
 He loads his servants,
 But at the sharing,
 The underservice
 And overservice
 Are alike barren.

As my disaster
 Your jest I cherish,
 And well may perish.
 Even so a falcon
 Is sometimes taken
 And scantily cautell'd ;
 Till when his master
 At length to loose him,
 To train and use him,
 Is after all gone,—
 The creature's throttled
 And will not waken.
 Wherefore, my lady,
 If you will own me,
 O look upon me !
 If I'm not thought on,
 At least perceive me !
 O do not leave me
 So much forgotten !

If, lady, truly
 You wish my profit,
 What follows of it
 Though still you say so ?—
 For all your well-wishes
 I still am waiting.
 I grow unruly,
 And deem at last I'm
 Only your pastime.

A child will play so,
 Who greatly relishes
 Sporting and petting
 With a little wild bird :
 Unaware he kills it,—
 Then turns it, feels it,
 Calls it with a mild word,
 Is angry after,—
 Then again in laughter
 Loud is the child heard.

O my delightful
 My own my lady,
 Upon the Mayday
 Which brought me to you
 Was all my haste then
 But a fool's venture ?
 To have my sight full
 Of you propitious
 Truly my wish was,
 And to pursue you
 And let love chasten
 My heart to the centre,
 But warming, lady,
 May end in burning.
 Of all this yearning
 What comes, I beg you ?
 In all your glances
 What is't a man sees ?—
 Fever and ague.

CIUNCIO FIORENTINO

CANZONE

*Of his Love ; with the Figures of a Stag, of Water, and
 of an Eagle*

LADY, with all the pains that I can take,
 I'll sing my love renewed, if I may, well,
 And only in your praise.
 The stag in his old age seeks out a snake
 And eats it, and then drinks, (I have heard tell,)
 Fearing the hidden ways
 Of the snake's poison, and renews his youth.
 Even such a draught, in truth,
 Was your sweet welcome, which cast out of me,
 With whole cure instantly,
 Whatever pain I felt, for my own good,
 When first we met that I might be renew'd.

A thing that has its proper essence changed
 By virtue of some powerful influence,
 As water has by fire,
 Returns to be itself, no more estranged,
 So soon as that has ceased which gave offence :
 Yea, now will more aspire
 Than ever, as the thing it first was made.
 Thine advent long delay'd
 Even thus had almost worn me out of love,
 Biding so far above :
 But now that thou hast brought love back for me,
 It mounts too much,—O lady, up to thee.

I have heard tell, and can esteem it true,
 How that an eagle looking on the sun,
 Rejoicing for his part
 And bringing oft his young to look there too,—
 If one gaze longer than another one,
 On him will set his heart.
 So I am made aware that Love doth lead
 All lovers, by their need,
 To gaze upon the brightness of their loves ;
 And whosoever moves
 His eyes the least from gazing upon her,
 The same shall be Love's inward minister.

RUGGIERI DI AMICI, SICILIANO

CANZONETTA

For a Renewal of Favours

I PLAY this sweet prelude
 For the best heart, and queen
 Of gentle womanhood,
 From here unto Messene ;
 Of flowers the fairest one ;
 The star that's next the sun ;
 The brightest star of all.
 What time I look at her,
 My thoughts do crowd and stir
 And are made musical.

Sweetest my lady, then
 Wilt thou not just permit,
 As once I spoke, again
 That I should speak of it ?
 My heart is burning me
 Within, though outwardly
 I seem so brave and gay.
 Ah ! dost thou not sometimes
 Remember the sweet rhymes
 Our lips made on that day ?—

When I her heart did move
 By kisses and by vows,
 Whom I then called my love,
 Fair-haired, with silver brows :
 She sang there as we sat ;
 Nor then withheld she aught
 Which it were right to give ;
 But said, " Indeed I will
 Be thine through good and ill
 As long as I may live."

And while I live, dear love,
 In gladness and in need
 Myself I will approve
 To be thine own indeed.
 If any man dare blame
 Our loves,—bring him to shame,
 O God ! and of this year
 Let him not see the May.
 Is't not a vile thing, say,
 To freeze at Midsummer ?

CARNINO Ghiberti, DA FIORENZA

CANZONE

Being absent from his Lady, he fears Death

I AM afar, but near thee is my heart ;
 Only soliciting
 That this long absence seem not ill to thee :
 For, if thou knew'st what pain and evil smart
 The lack of thy sweet countenance can bring,
 Thou wouldst remember me compassionately.
 Even as my case, the stag's is wont to be,
 Which, thinking to escape
 His death, escaping whence the pack gives cry,
 Is wounded and doth die.
 So, in my spirit imagining thy shape,
 I would fly Death, and Death o'ermasters me.

I am o'erpower'd of Death when, telling o'er
 Thy beauties in my thought,
 I seem to have that which I have not : then
 I am as he who in each meteor,
 Dazzled and wildered, sees the thing he sought.
 In suchwise Love deals with me among men :—
 Thee whom I have not, yet who dost sustain
 My life, he bringeth in his arms to me
 Full oft,—yet I approach not unto thee.
 Ah ! if we be not joined i' the very flesh,
 It cannot last but I indeed shall die
 By burden of this love that weigheth so.
 As an o'erladen bough, while yet 'tis fresh,
 Breaks, and itself and fruit are lost thereby —
 So shall I, love, be lost, alas for woe !

And, if this slay indeed that thus doth rive
 My heart, how then shall I be comforted ?
 Thou, as a lioness
 Her cub, in sore distress
 Might'st toil to bring me out of death alive :
 But couldst thou raise me up, if I were dead ?

Oh ! but an' if thou wouldst, I were more glad
 Of death than life,—thus kept
 From thee and the true life thy face can bring.
 So in nowise could death be harsh or bad ;
 But it should seem to me that I had slept
 And was awakened with thy summoning.
 Yet, sith the hope thereof is a vain thing,
 I, in fast fealty,
 Can like the Assassin * be,
 Who, to be subject to his lord in all,
 Goes and accepts his death and has no heed :
 Even as he doth so could I do indeed.
 Nevertheless, this one memorial—
 The last—I send thee, for Love orders it.
 He, this last once, wills that thus much be writ
 In prayer that it may fall 'twixt thee and me
 After the manner of
 Two birds that feast their love
 Even unto anguish, till, if neither quit
 The other, one must perish utterly.

PRINZIVALLE DORIA

CANZONE

Of his Love, with the Figure of a sudden Storm

EVEN as the day when it is yet at dawning
 Seems mild and kind, being fair to look upon,
 While the birds carol underneath their awning
 Of leaves, as if they never would have done ;
 Which on a sudden changes, just at noon,
 And the broad light is broken into rain
 That stops and comes again ;
 Even as the traveller, who had held his way
 Hopeful and glad because of the bright weather,
 Forgetteth then his gladness altogether ;
 Even so am I, through Love, alas the day !

It plainly is through Love that I am so.
 At first, he let me still grow happier
 Each day, and made her kindness seem to grow ;
 But now he has quite changed her heart in her.
 And I, whose hopes throbbed and were all astir
 For times when I should call her mine aloud,
 And in her pride be proud
 Who is more fair than gems are, ye may say,
 Having that fairness which holds hearts in rule ;—
 I have learnt now to count him but a fool
 Who before evening says, A goodly day.

* Alluding to the Syrian tribe of Assassins, whose chief was the Old Man of the Mountain.

It had been better not to have begun,
 Since, having known my error, 'tis too late.
 This thing from which I suffer, thou hast done,
 Lady: canst thou restore me my first state?
 The wound thou gavest canst thou medicate?
 Not thou, forsooth: thou hast not any art
 To keep death from my heart.
 O lady! where is now my life's full meed
 Of peace,—mine once, and which thou took'st away?
 Surely it cannot now be far from day:
 Night is already very long indeed.

The sea is much more beautiful at rest
 Than when the storm is trampling over it.
 Wherefore, to see the smile which has so bless'd
 This heart of mine, deem'st thou these eyes unfit?
 There is no maid so lovely, it is writ,
 That by such stern unwomanly regard
 Her face may not be marr'd.
 I therefore pray of thee, my own soul's wife,
 That thou remember me who am forgot.
 How shall I stand without thee? Art thou not
 The pillar of the building of my life?

RUSTICO DI FILIPPO

I

SONNET

Of the making of Master Messerin

WHEN God had finished Master Messerin,
 He really thought it something to have done:
 Bird, man, and beast had got a chance in one,
 And each felt flattered, it was hoped, therein.
 For he is like a goose i' the windpipe thin,
 And like a cameleopard high i' the loins;
 To which, for manhood, you'll be told, he joins
 Some kinds of flesh-hues and a callow chin.
 As to his singing, he affects the crow;
 As to his learning, beasts in general;
 And sets all square by dressing like a man.
 God made him, having nothing else to do;
 And proved there is not anything at all
 He cannot make, if that's a thing He can.

II

SONNET

*Of the Safety of Messer Fazio **

MASTER BERTUCCIO, you are called to account
 That you guard Fazio's life from poison ill:
 And every man in Florence tells me still
 He has no horse that he can safely mount.
 A mighty war-horse worth a thousand pound
 Stands in Cremona stabled at his will;
 Which for his honoured person should fulfil
 Its use. Nay, sir, I pray you be not found
 So poor a steward. For all fame of yours
 Is cared for best, believe me, when I say:—
 Our Florence gives Bertuccio charge of one
 Who rides her own proud spirit like a horse;
 Whom Coccio himself must needs obey;
 And whom she loves best, being her strongest son.

III

SONNET

Of Messer Ugolino †

IF any one had anything to say
 To the Lord Ugolino, because he's
 Not staunch, and never minds his promises,
 'Twere hardly courteous, for it is his way.
 Courteous it were to say such sayings nay:
 As thus: He's true, sir, only takes his ease
 And don't care merely if it plague or please,
 And has good thoughts, no doubt, if they would stay.
 Now I know he's so loyal every whit
 And altogether worth such a good word
 As worst would best and best would worst befit.
 He'd love his party with a dear accord
 If only he could once quite care for it,
 But can't run post for any Law or Lord.

* I have not been able to trace the Fazio to whom this sonnet refers.

† The character here drawn certainly suggests Count Ugolino de' Gherardeschi, though it would seem that Rustico died nearly twenty years before the tragedy of the Tower of Famine.

PUCCIARELLO DI FIORENZA

SONNET

Of Expediency

Pass and let pass,—this counsel I would give,—
 And wrap thy cloak what way the wind may blow ;
 Who cannot raise himself were wise to know
 How best, by dint of stooping, he may thrive.
 Take for ensample this : when the winds drive
 Against it, how the sapling tree bends low,
 And, once being prone, abideth even so
 Till the hard harsh wind cease to rend and rive.
 Wherefore, when thou behold'st thyself abased,
 Be blind, deaf, dumb ; yet therewith none the less
 Note thou in peace what thou shalt hear and see,
 Till from such state by Fortune thou be raised.
 Then hack, lop, buffet, thrust, and so redress
 Thine ill that it may not return on thee.

ALBERTUCCIO DELLA VIOLA

CANZONE

Of his Lady dancing

AMONG the dancers I beheld her dance,
 Her who alone is my heart's sustenance.

So, as she danced,^o I took this wound of her ;
 Alas ! the flower of flowers, she did not fail.
 Woe's me ! I will be Jew and blasphemer
 If the good god of Love do not prevail
 To bring me to thy grace, oh ! thou most fair.
 My lady and my lord ! alas for wail !
 How many days and how much sufferance ?

Oh ! would to God that I had never seen
 Her face, nor had beheld her dancing so !
 Then had I missed this wound which is so keen—
 Yea, mortal—for I think not to win through
 Unless her love be my sweet medicine ;
 Whereof I am in doubt, alas for woe !
 Fearing therein but such a little chance.

She was apparelled in a Syrian cloth,
 My lady :—oh ! but she did grace the same,
 Gladdening all folk, that they were nowise loth
 At sight of her to put their ills from them.
 But upon me her power hath had such growth
 That nought of joy thenceforth, but a live flame,
 Stirs at my heart,—which is her countenance.

Sweet-smelling rose, sweet, sweet to smell and see,
 Great solace had she in her eyes for all ;
 But heavy woe is mine ; for upon me
 Her eyes as they were wont, did never fall.
 Which thing if it were done advisedly,
 I would choose death, that could no more appal,
 Not caring for my life's continuance.

TOMMASO BUZZUOLA, DA FAENZA

SONNET

He is in awe of his Lady

EVEN as the moon amid the stars doth shed
 Her lovelier splendour of exceeding light,—
 Even so my lady seems the queen and head
 Among all other ladies in my sight.
 Her human visage, like an angel's made,
 Is glorious even to beauty's perfect height;
 And with her simple bearing soft and staid
 All secret modesties of soul unite.
 I therefore feel a dread in loving her;
 Because of thinking on her excellence,
 The wisdom and the beauty which she has.
 I pray her for the sake of God,—whereas
 I am her servant, yet in sore suspense
 Have held my peace,—to have me in her care.

NOFFO BONAGUIDA

SONNET

He is enjoined to pure Love

A SPIRIT of Love, with Love's intelligence,
 Maketh his sojourn alway in my breast,
 Maintaining me in perfect joy and rest;
 Nor could I live an hour, were he gone thence:
 Through whom my love hath such full permanence
 That thereby other loves seem dispossess'd.
 I have no pain, nor am with sighs oppress'd,
 So calm is the benignant influence.
 Because this spirit of Love, who speaks to me
 Of my dear lady's tenderness and worth,
 Says: "More than thus to love her seek thou not,
 Even as she loves thee in her wedded thought;
 But honour her in thy heart delicately:
 For this is the most blessed joy on earth."

LIPPO PASCHI DE' BARDI

SONNET

He solicits a Lady's Favours

WERT thou as prone to yield unto my prayer
 The thing, sweet virgin, which I ask of thee,
 As to repeat, with all humility,
 "Pray you go hence, and of your speech forbear;"—
 Then unto joy might I my heart prepare,
 Having my fellows in subserviency;
 But, for that thou contemn'st and mockest me,
 Whether of life or death I take no care.
 Because my heart may not assuage its drouth
 Nor ever may again rejoice at all
 Till the sweet face bend to be felt of man,—
 Till tenderly the beautiful soft mouth
 I kiss by thy good leave; thenceforth to call
 Blessing and triumph Love's extremest ban.

SER PACE, NOTAIO DA FIORENZA

SONNET

A Return to Love

A FRESH content of fresh enamouring
 Yields me afresh, at length, the sense of song,
 Who had well-nigh forgotten Love so long :
 But now my homage he will have me bring.
 So that my life is now a joyful thing,
 Having new-found desire, elate and strong,
 In her to whom all grace and worth belong,
 On whom I now attend for ministering.
 The countenance remembering, with the limbs,
 She was all imaged on my heart at once
 Suddenly by a single look at her :
 Whom when I now behold, a heat there seems
 Within, as of a subtle fire that runs
 Unto my heart, and remains burning there.

NICCOLÒ DEGLI ALBIZZI

PROLONGED SONNET

When the Troops were returning from Milan

IF you could see, fair brother, how dead beat
 The fellows look who come through Rome to-day,—
 Black yellow smoke-dried visages,—you'd say
 They thought their haste at going all too fleet.
 Their empty victual-wagons up the street
 Over the bridge dreadfully sound and sway ;
 Their eyes, as hanged men's, turning the wrong way ;
 And nothing on their backs, or heads, or feet.
 One sees the ribs and all the skeletons
 Of their gaunt horses ; and a sorry sight
 Are the torn saddles, crammed with straw and stones.
 They are ashamed, and march throughout the night ;
 Stumbling, for hunger, on their marrowbones ;
 Like barrels rolling, jolting, in this plight.
 Their arms all gone, not even their swords are saved ;
 And each as silent as a man being shaved.

FRANCESCO DA BARBERINO

I

BLANK VERSE *

A Virgin declares her Beauties

Do not conceive that I shall here recount
 All my own beauty: yet I promise you
 That you, by what I tell, shall understand
 All that befits and that is well to know.

My bosom, which is very softly made,
 Of a white even colour without stain,
 Bears two fair apples, fragrant, sweetly-savoured,
 Gathered together from the Tree of Life
 The which is in the midst of Paradise.
 And these no person ever yet has touched;
 For out of nurse's and of mother's hands
 I was, when God in secret gave them me.
 These ere I yield I must know well to whom;
 And for that I would not be robbed of them,
 I speak not all the virtue that they have;
 Yet thus far speaking:—blessed were the man
 Who once should touch them, were it but a little;—
 See them I say not, for that might not be.

My girdle, clipping pleasure round about,
 Over my clear dress even unto my knees
 Hangs down with sweet precision tenderly;
 And under it Virginitv abides.
 Faithful and simple and of plain belief
 She is, with her fair garland bright like gold;
 And very fearful if she overhears
 Speech of herself; the wherefore ye perceive
 That I speak soft lest she be made ashamed.

Lo! this is she who hath for company
 The Son of God and Mother of the Son;
 Lo! this is she who sits with many in heaven;
 Lo! this is she with whom are few on earth.

II

SENTENZE †

Of Sloth against Sin

THERE is a vice which oft
 I've heard men praise; and divers forms it has;
 And it is this. Whereas
 Some, by their wisdom, lordship, or repute,

When tumults are afoot,
 Might stifle them, or at the least allay,—
 These certain ones will say,
 "The wise man bids thee fly the noise of men."

* Extracted from his long treatise, in unrhymed verse and in prose, "Of the Government and Conduct of Women"; (*Del Reggimento e dei Costumi delle Donne*).

† This and the three following pieces are extracted from his "Documents of Love" (*Documenti d' Amore*).

One says, "Wouldst thou maintain
Worship,—avoid where thou mayst not avail;
And do not breed worse ail
By adding one more voice to strife begun."

Another, with this one,
Avers, "I could but bear a small expense,
Or yield a slight defence."
A third says this, "I could but offer words."

Or one, whose tongue records
Unwillingly his own base heart, will say,
"I'll not be led astray
To bear a hand in others' life or death."

They have it in their teeth!
For unto this each man is pledged and bound;
And this thing shall be found
Entered against him at the Judgment Day.

III

SENTENZE

Of Sins in Speech

Now these four things, if thou
Consider, are so bad that none are worse.
First,—among counsellors
To thrust thyself, when not called absolutely.

And in the other three
Many offend by their own evil wit.
When men in council sit,
One talks because he loves not to be still;

And one to have his will;
And one for nothing else but only show.
These rules were well to know,
First for the first, for the others afterward.

Where many are repair'd
And met together, never go with them
Unless thou'rt called by name.
This for the first: now for the other three.

What truly thou dost see
Turn in thy mind, and faithfully report;
And in the plainest sort
Thy wisdom may, proffer thy counselling.

There is another thing
Belongs hereto, the which is on this wise.
If one should ask advice
Of thine for his own need whate'er it be,—

This is my word to thee:—
Deny it if it be not clearly of use:
Or turn to some excuse
That may avail, and thou shalt have done well.

IV

SENTENZE

Of Importunities and Troublesome Persons

THERE is a vice prevails
 Concerning which I'll set you on your guard ;
 And other four, which hard
 It were (as may be thought) that I should blame.

Some think that still of *them*—
 Whate'er is said—some ill speech lies beneath ;
 And this to them is death :
 Whereby we plainly may perceive their sins.

And now let others wince.
 One sort there is, who, thinking that they please,
 (Because no wit's in these,)
 Where'er you go, will stick to you all day,

And answer, (when you say,
 " Don't let me tire you out ! ") " Oh never mind—
 Say nothing of the kind,—
 It's quite a pleasure to be where you are ! "

A second,—when, as far
 As he could follow you, the whole day long
 He's sung you his dull song,
 And you for courtesy have borne with it,—

Will think you've had a treat.
 A third will take his special snug delight,—
 Some day you've come in sight
 Of some great thought and got it well in view,—

Just then to drop on you.
 A fourth, for any insult you've received
 Will say he *is so* grieved,
 And daily bring the subject up again.

So now I would be fain
 To show you your best course at all such times ;
 And counsel you in rhymes
 That you yourself offend not in likewise.

In these four cases lies
 This help :—to think upon your own affair,
 Just showing here and there
 By just a word that you are listening ;

And still to the last thing
 That's said to you attend in your reply,
 And let the rest go by,—
 It's quite a chance if he remembers them.

Yet do not, all the same,
 Deny your ear to any speech of weight.
 But if importunate
 The speaker is, and will not be denied,

Just turn the speech aside
When you can find some plausible pretence ;
For if you have the sense,
By a quick question or a sudden doubt

You may so put him out
That he shall not remember where he was,
And by such means you'll pass
Upon your way and be well rid of him.

And now it may beseem
I give you the advice I promised you.
Before you have to do
With men whom you must meet continually,

Take notice what they be ;
And so you shall find readily enough
If you can win their love,
And give yourself for answer Yes or No.

And finding Yes, do so
That still the love between you may increase.
Yet if they be of these
Whom sometimes it is hard to understand,

Let some slight cause be plann'd,
And seem to go,—so you shall learn their will :
And if but one sit still
As 'twere in thought,—then go, unless he call.

Lastly, if insult gall
Your friend, this is the course that you should take.
At first 'tis well you make
As much lament thereof as you think fit,—

Then speak no more of it,
Unless himself should bring it up again ;
And then no more refrain
From full discourse, but say his grief is yours.

V

SENTENZE

Of Caution

SAY, wouldst thou guard thy son,
That sorrow he may shun ?
Begin at the beginning
And let him keep from sinning.
Wouldst guard thy house ? One door
Make to it, and no more.
Wouldst guard thine orchard-wall ?
Be free of fruit to all,

FAZIO DEGLI UBERTI

I

CANZONE

His Portrait of his Lady, Angiola of Verona

I look at the crisp golden-threaded hair :
 Whereof, to thrall my heart, Love twists a net :
 Using at times a string of pearls for bait,
 And sometimes with a single rose therein.
 I look into her eyes which unaware
 Through mine own eyes to my heart penetrate ;
 Their splendour, that is excellently great,
 To the sun's radiance seeming near akin,
 Yet from herself a sweeter light to win.
 So that I, gazing on that lovely one,
 Discourse in this wise with my secret thought :—
 "Woe's me ! why am I not,
 Even as my wish, alone with her alone,—
 That hair of hers, so heavily uplaid,
 To shed down braid by braid,
 And make myself two mirrors of her eyes
 Within whose light all other glory dies ?"

I look at the amorous beautiful mouth,
 The spacious forehead which her locks enclose,
 The small white teeth, the straight and shapely nose,
 And the clear brows of a sweet pencilling.
 And then the thought within me gains full growth,
 Saying, "Be careful that thy glance now goes
 Between her lips, red as an open rose,
 Quite full of every dear and precious thing ;
 And listen to her gracious answering,
 Born of the gentle mind that in her dwells,
 Which from all things can glean the nobler half.
 Look thou when she doth laugh
 How much her laugh is sweeter than aught else."
 Thus evermore my spirit makes avow
 Touching her mouth ; till now
 I would give anything that I possess,
 Only to hear her mouth say frankly, "Yes."

I look at her white easy neck, so well
 From shoulders and from bosom lifted out ;
 And at her round cleft chin, which beyond doubt
 No fancy in the world could have design'd.
 And then, with longing grown more voluble,
 "Were it not pleasant now," pursues my thought,
 "To have that neck within thy two arms caught
 And kiss it till the mark were left behind ?"
 Then, urgently : "The eyelids of thy mind
 Open thou : if such loveliness be given
 To sight here,—what of that which she doth hide ?
 Only the wondrous ride
 Of sun and planets through the visible heaven
 Tells us that there beyond is Paradise.
 Thus, if thou fix thine eyes,
 Of a truth certainly thou must infer
 That every earthly joy abides in her,"

I look at the large arms, so lithe and round,—
 At the hands, which are white and rosy too,—
 At the long fingers, clasped and woven through,
 Bright with the ring which one of them doth wear.
 Then my thought whispers: "Were thy body wound
 Within those arms, as loving women's do,
 In all thy veins were born a life made new
 Which thou couldst find no language to declare.
 Behold if any picture can compare
 With her just limbs, each fit in shape and size,
 Or match her angel's colour like a pearl.
 She is a gentle girl
 To see; yet when it needs, her scorn can rise,
 Meek, bashful, and in all things temperate,
 Her virtue holds its state;
 In whose least act there is that gift express'd
 Which of all reverence makes her worthiest."

Soft as a peacock steps she, or as a stork
 Straight on herself, taller and statelier:
 'Tis a good sight how every limb doth stir
 For ever in a womanly sweet way.
 "Open thy soul to see God's perfect work,"
 (My thought begins afresh), "and look at her
 When with some lady-friend exceeding fair
 She bends and mingles arms and locks in play.
 Even as all lesser lights vanish away,
 When the sun moves, before his dazzling face,
 So is this lady brighter than all these.
 How should she fail to please,—
 Love's self being no more than her loveliness?
 In all her ways some beauty springs to view;
 All that she loves to do
 Tends alway to her honour's single scope;
 And only from good deeds she draws her hope."

Song, thou canst surely say, without pretence,
 That since the first fair woman ever made,
 Not one can have display'd
 More power upon all hearts than this one doth;
 Because in her are both
 Loveliness and the soul's true excellence:—
 And yet (woe's me!) is pity absent thence?

II

EXTRACT FROM THE "DITTAMONDO" *

(LIB. IV. CAP. 23)

Of England, and of its Marvels

Now to Great Britain we must make our way,
 Unto which kingdom Brutus gave its name
 What time he won it from the giants' rule.
 'Tis thought at first its name was Albion,
 And Anglia, from a damsel, afterwards.
 The island is so great and rich and fair,
 It conquers others that in Europe be,
 Even as the sun surpasses other stars.
 Many and great sheep-pastures bountifully
 Nature has set there, and herein more bless'd,
 That they can hold themselves secure from wolves.
 Jet also doth the hollow land enrich,
 (Whose properties my guide Solinus here
 Told me, and how its colour comes to it ;)
 And pearls are found in great abundance too.
 The people are as white and comely-faced
 As they of Ethiop land are black and foul.
 Many hot springs and limpid fountain-heads
 We found about this land, and spacious plains,
 And divers beasts that dwell within thick woods.
 Plentiful orchards too and fertile fields
 It has, and castle-forts, and cities fair
 With palaces and girth of lofty walls.
 And proud wide rivers without any fords
 We saw, and flesh, and fish, and crops enough.
 Justice is strong throughout those provinces.

Now this I saw not ; but so strange a thing
 It was to hear, and by all men confirm'd,
 That it is fit to note it as I heard ;—
 To wit, there is a certain islet here
 Among the rest, where folk are born with tails,
 Short, as are found in stags and such-like beasts.†
 For this I vouch,—that when a child is freed
 From swaddling bands, the mother without stay
 Passes elsewhere, and 'scapes the care of it.

* I am quite sorry (after the foregoing love-song, the original of which is not perhaps surpassed by any poem of its class in existence) to endanger the English reader's respect for Fazio by these extracts from the *Dittamondo*, or "Song of the World," in which he will find his own country endowed with some astounding properties. However, there are a few fine characteristic sentences, and the rest is no more absurd than other travellers' tales of that day ; while the table of our Norman line of kings is not without some historical interest. It must be remembered that the love-song was the work of Fazio's youth, and the *Dittamondo* that of his old age, when we may suppose his powers to have been no longer at their best. Besides what I have given relating to Great Britain, there is a table of the Saxon dynasty, and some surprising facts about Scotland and Ireland ; as well as a curious passage written in French, and purporting to be an account, given by a royal courier, of Edward the Third's invasion of France. I felt half disposed to include these, but was afraid of overloading with such matter a selection made chiefly for the sake of poetic beauty. I should mention that the *Dittamondo*, like Dante's great poem, is written in *terza rima* ; but as perfect literality was of primary importance in the above extracts, I have departed for once from my rule of fidelity to the original metre.

† Mediæval Britons would seem really to have been credited with this slight peculiarity. At the siege of Damietta, Cœur-de-Lion's bastard brother is said to have pointed out the prudence of deferring the assault, and to have received for rejoinder from the French crusaders, "See now these faint-hearted English with the tails !" To which the Englishman replied, "You will need stout hearts to keep near our tails when the assault is made."

I put no faith herein ; but it is said
Among them, how such marvellous trees are there
That they grow birds, and this is their sole fruit.*

Forty times eighty is the circuit ta'en,
With ten times fifteen, if I do not err,
By our miles reckoning its circumference.
Here every metal may be dug ; and here
I found the people to be given to God,
Steadfast, and strong, and restive to constraint.
Nor is this strange, when one considereth ;
For courage, beauty, and large-heartedness,
Were there, as it is said, in ancient days.

North Wales, and Orkney, and the banks of Thames,
Strangoure and Listenois and Northumberland,
I chose with my companion to behold.†
We went to London, and I saw the Tower
Where Guenevere her honour did defend,
With the Thames river which runs close to it.
I saw the castle which by force was ta'en
With the three shields by gallant Lancelot,
The second year that he did deeds of arms.
I beheld Camelot despoiled and waste ;
And was where one and the other had her birth,
The maids of Corbonek and Astolat.
Also I saw the castle where Geraint
Lay with his Enid ; likewise Merlin's stone,
Which for another's love I joyed to see.
I found the tract where is the pine-tree well,
And where of old the knight of the black shield
With weeping and with laughter kept the pass,
What time the pitiless and bitter dwarf
Before Sir Gawaine's eyes discourteously
With many heavy stripes led him away.
I saw the valley which Sir Tristram won
When having slain the giant hand to hand
He set the stranger knights from prison free.
And last I viewed the field, at Salisbury,
Of that great martyrdom which left the world
Empty of honour, valour, and delight.

So, compassing that Island round and round,
I saw and hearkened many things and more
Which might be fair to tell but which I hide.

* This is the Barnacle-tree, often described in old books of travels and natural history, and which Sir Thomas Browne classes gravely among his "Vulgar Errors."

† What follows relates to the Romances of the Round Table. The only allusion here which I cannot trace to the *Mort d'Arthur* is one where "Rech" and "Nida" are spoken of: it seems however that, by a perversion hardly too corrupt for Fazio, these might be the Geraint and Enid whose story occurs in the *Mabinogion*, and has been used by Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King*. Why Fazio should have "joyed to see" Merlin's stone "for another's love" seems inscrutable; unless indeed the words "*per amor altrui*" are a mere idiom, and Merlin himself is meant; and even then Merlin, in his compulsory niche under the stone, may hardly have been grateful for such friendly interest.

I should not omit, in this second edition, to acknowledge several obligations, as regards the above extract from the *Dittamondo*, to the unknown author of an acute and kindly article in the *Spectator* for January 18th, 1862.

III

EXTRACT FROM THE "DITTAMONDO"

(LIB. IV. CAP. 25)

Of the Dukes of Normandy, and thence of the Kings of England, from William the First to Edward the Third

THOU well hast heard that Rollo had two sons,
 One William Longsword, and the other Richard,
 Whom thou now know'st to the marrow, as I do.*
 Daring and watchful, as a leopard is,
 Was William, fair in body and in face,
 Ready at all times, never slow to act.
 He fought great battles, but at last was slain
 By the earl of Flanders; so that in his place
 Richard his son was o'er the people set.
 And next in order, lit with blessed flame
 Of the Holy Spirit, his son followed him,
 Who justly lived 'twixt more and less midway,—
 His father's likeness, as in shape in name.
 So unto him succeeded as his heir
 Robert the Frank, high-counselled and august:
 And thereon following, I proceed to tell
 How William, who was Robert's son, did make
 The realm of England his co-heritage.
 The same was brave and courteous certainly,
 Generous and gracious, humble before God,
 Master in war and versed in counsel too.
 He with great following came from Normandy
 And fought with Harold, and so left him slain,
 And took the realm, and held it at his will.
 Thus did this kingdom change its signiory;
 And know that all the kings it since has had
 Only from this man take their origin.
 Therefore, that thou mayst quite forget its past,
 I say this happened when, since our Lord's Love,
 Some thousand years and sixty were gone by.

While the fourth Henry ruled as emperor,
 This king of England fought in many wars,
 And waxed through all in honour and account.
 And William Rufus next succeeded him;
 Tall, strong, and comely-limbed, but therewith proud
 And grasping, and a killer of his kind.
 In body he was like his father much,
 But was in nature more his contrary
 Than fire and water when they come together;
 Yet so far good that he won fame in arms,
 And by himself risked many an enterprise,
 All which he brought with honour to an end.
 Also if he were bad, he gat great ill;
 For, chasing once the deer within a wood,
 And having wandered from his company,
 Him by mischance a servant of his own
 Hit with an arrow, that he fell and died.

* The speaker here is the poet's guide Solinus (an historical and geographical writer of the third century,) who bears the same relation to him which Virgil bears to Dante in the *Commedia*.

And after him Henry the First was king,
His brother, but therewith the father's like,
Being well with God and just in peace and war.
Next Stephen, on his death, the kingdom seized,
But with sore strife; of whom thus much be said,
That he was frank and good is told of him.
And after him another Henry reigned,
Who, when the war in France was waged and done
Passed beyond seas with the first Frederick.
Then Richard came, who, after heavy toil
At sea, was captive made in Germany,
Leaving the Sepulchre to join his host.
Who being dead, full heavy was the wrath
Of John his brother; and so well he took
Revenge, that still a moan is made of it.
This John in kingly largesse and in war
Delighted, when the kingdom fell to him;
Hunting and riding ever in hot haste.

Handsome in body and most poor in heart,
Henry his son and heir succeeded him,
Of whom to speak I count it wretchedness.
Yet there's some good to say of him, I grant;
Because of him was the good Edward born,
Whose valour still is famous in the world.
The same was he who, being without dread
Of the Old Man's Assassins, captured them,
And who repaid the jester if he lied.*
The same was he who over seas wrought scathe
So many times to Malekdar, and bent
Unto the Christian rule whole provinces.
He was a giant of his body, and great
And proud to view, and of such strength of soul
As never saddens with adversity.

His reign was long; and when his death befell,
The second Edward mounted to the throne,
Who was of one kind with his grandfather.
I say from what report still says of him,
That he was evil, of base intellect,
And would not be advised by any man.
Conceive, good heart! that how to thatch a roof
With straw,—conceive!—he held himself expert,
And therein constantly would take delight!
By fraud he seized the Earl of Lancaster,
And what he did with him I say not here,
But that he left him neither town nor tower.
And thiswise, step by step, thou mayst perceive
That I to the third Edward have advanced,
Who now lives strong and full of enterprise,
And who already has grown manifest
For the best Christian known of in the world.
Thus I have told, as thou wouldst have me tell,
The race of William even unto the end.

* This may either refer to some special incident or merely mean generally that he would not suffer lying even in a jester.

FRANCO SACCHETTI

I

BALLATA

His Talk with certain Peasant-girls

"YE graceful peasant-girls and mountain-maids,
Whence come ye homeward through these evening shades ? "

" We come from where the forest skirts the hill ;
A very little cottage is our home,
Where with our father and our mother still
We live, and love our life, nor wish to roam.
Back every evening from the field we come
And bring with us our sheep from pasturing there."

" Where, tell me, is the hamlet of your birth,
Whose fruitage is the sweetest by so much ?
Ye seem to me as creatures worship-worth,
The shining of your countenance is such.
No gold about your clothes, coarse to the touch,
Nor silver ; yet with such an angel's air !

" I think your beauties might make great complaint
Of being thus shown over mount and dell ;
Because no city is so excellent
But that your stay therein were honourable.
In very truth, now, does it like ye well
To live so poorly on the hill-side here ? "

" Better it liketh one of us, pardie,
Behind her flock to seek the pasture-stance,
Far better than it liketh one of ye
To ride unto your curtained rooms and dance.
We seek no riches neither golden chance
Save wealth of flowers to weave into our hair."

Ballad, if I were now as once I was,
I'd make myself a shepherd on some hill,
And, without telling any one, would pass
Where these girls went, and follow at their will ;
And " Mary " and " Martin " we would murmur still,
And I would be for ever where they were,

II

CATCH

On a Fine Day

" BE stirring, girls ! we ought to have a run :
Look, did you ever see so fine a day ?
Fling spindles right away,
And rocks and reels and wools :
Now don't be fools,—
To-day your spinning's done,

Up with you, up with you!" So, one by one
 They caught hands, catch who can,
 Then singing, singing, to the river they ran,
 They ran, they ran
 To the river, the river;
 And the merry-go-round
 Carries them at a bound
 To the mill o'er the river.
 "Miller, miller, miller,
 Weigh me this lady
 And this other. Now, steady!"
 "You weigh a hundred, you,
 And this one weighs two."
 "Why, dear, you do get stout!"
 "You think so, dear, no doubt:
 Are you in a decline?"
 "Keep your temper, and I'll keep mine.
 Come, girls," ("O thank you, miller!")
 "We'll go home when you will."
 So, as we crossed the hill,
 A clown came in great grief
 Crying, "Stop thief! stop thief!
 O what a wretch I am!"
 "Well, fellow, here's a clatter!
 Well, what's the matter?"
 "O Lord, O Lord, the wolf has got my lamb!"
 Now at that word of woe,
 The beauties came and clung about me so
 That if wolf had but shown himself, maybe
 I too had caught a lamb that fled to me.

III

CATCH

On a Wet Day

As I walked thinking through a little grove,
 Some girls that gathered flowers came passing me,
 Saying, "Look here! look there!" delightedly.
 "O here it is!" "What's that?" "A lily, love."
 "And there are violets!"
 "Further for roses! Oh the lovely pets—
 The darling beauties! Oh the nasty thorn!
 Look here, my hand's all torn!"
 "What's that that jumps?" "Oh don't! it's a grasshopper!"
 "Come run, come run,
 Here's bluebells!" "Oh what fun!"
 "Not that way! Stop her!"
 "Yes, this way!" "Pluck them, then!"
 "Oh, I've found mushrooms! Oh look here!" "Oh, I'm
 Quite sure that further on we'll get wild thyme."

"Oh we shall stay too long, it's going to rain!
 There's lightning, oh there's thunder!"

"Oh shan't we hear the vesper-bell, I wonder?"
 "Why, it's not nones, you silly little thing;
 And don't you hear the nightingales that sing
Fly away O die away?"
 "O I hear something! Hush!"
 "Why, where? what is it then?" "Ah! in that bush!"
 So every girl here knocks it, shakes and shocks it,
 Till with the stir they make
 Out skurries a great snake.
 "O Lord! O me! Alack! Ah me! alack!"
 They scream, and then all run and scream again,
 And then in heavy drops down comes the rain.

Each running at the other in a fright,
 Each trying to get before the other, and crying,
 And flying, stumbling, tumbling, wrong or right;
 One sets her knee
 There where her foot should be;
 One has her hands and dress
 All smothered up with mud in a fine mess;
 And one gets trampled on by two or three.
 What's gathered is let fall
 About the wood and not picked up at all.
 The wreaths of flowers are scattered on the ground;
 And still as screaming hustling without rest
 They run this way and that and round and round,
 She thinks herself in luck who runs the best.

I stood quite still to have a perfect view,
 And never noticed till I got wet through.

ANONYMOUS POEMS

I

SONNET

*A Lady laments for her lost Lover, by similitude of a
 Falcon*

ALAS for me, who loved a falcon well!
 So well I loved him, I was nearly dead:
 Ever at my low call he bent his head,
 And ate of mine, not much, but all that fell.
 Now he has fled, how high I cannot tell,
 Much higher now than ever he has fled,
 And is in a fair garden housed and fed;
 Another lady, alas! shall love him well.
 O my own falcon whom I taught and rear'd!
 Sweet bells of shining gold I gave to thee
 That in the chase thou shouldst not be afraid.
 Now thou hast risen like the risen sea,
 Broken thy jesses loose, and disappear'd,
 As soon as thou wast skilled in falconry.

II

BALLATA

One speaks of the Beginning of his Love

THIS fairest one of all the stars, whose flame,
 For ever lit, my inner spirit fills,
 Came to me first one day between the hills.
 I wondered very much; but God the Lord
 Said, "From Our Virtue, lo! this light is pour'd."
 So in a dream it seemed that I was led
 By a great Master to a garden spread
 With lilies underfoot and overhead.

III

BALLATA

One speaks of his False Lady

WHEN the last greyness dwells throughout the air,
 And the first star appears,
 Appeared to me a lady very fair.
 I seemed to know her well by her sweet air;
 And, gazing, I was hers.
 To honour her, I followed her: and then . . .
 Ah! what thou givest, God give thee again,
 Whenever thou remain'st as I remain.

IV

BALLATA

One speaks of his Feigned and Real Love

FOR no love borne by me,
 Neither because I care
 To find that thou art fair,—
 To give another pain I gaze on thee.

And now, lest such as thought that thou couldst move
 My heart, should read this verse,
 I will say here, another has my love.
 An angel of the spheres
 She seems, and I am hers;
 Who has more gentleness
 And owns a fairer face
 Than any woman else,—at least, to me.

Sweeter than any, more in all at ease,
 Lighter and lovelier.
 Not to disparage thee; for whoso sees
 May like thee more than her.
 This vest will one prefer,
 And one another vest.
 To me she seems the best,
 And I am hers, and let what will be, be.

For no love borne by me,
 Neither because I care
 To find that thou art fair,—
 To give another pain, I gaze on thee,

V

BALLATA

Of True and False Singing

A LITTLE wild bird sometimes at my ear
Sings his own little verses very clear :
Others sing louder that I do not hear.

For singing loudly is not singing well ;
But ever by the song that's soft and low
The master-singer's voice is plain to tell.
Few have it and yet all are masters now,
And each of them can trill out what he calls
His ballads, canzonets, and madrigals.

The world with masters is so covered o'er,
There is no room for pupils any more.

END OF DANTE AND HIS CIRCLE

TRANSLATIONS

from the

GERMAN, ITALIAN, FRENCH, AND

GREEK

LENORE

BY G. A. BÜRGER

I have retained the German version of the heroine's name; thinking it more suited to the metre than the lengthy English word "Leonora"—and by far less displeasing to the ear than the stunted and ugly abbreviation, "Leonor."

G. C. R.

UP rose Lenore as the red morn wore,
From weary visions starting;
"Art faithless, William, or, William, art dead?
'Tis long since thy departing."
For he, with Frederick's men of might,
In fair Prague waged the uncertain fight;
Nor once had he writ in the hurry of war,
And sad was the true heart that sickened afar.

The Empress and the King,
With ceaseless quarrel tired,
At length relaxed the stubborn hate
Which rivalry inspired:
And the martial throng, with laugh and song,
Spoke of their homes as they rode along,
And clank, clank, clank! came every rank,
With the trumpet-sound that rose and sank.

And here and there and everywhere,
Along the swarming ways,
Went old man and boy, with the music of joy,
On the gallant bands to gaze;
And the young child shouted to spy the vaward,
And trembling and blushing the bride pressed forward:
But ah! for the sweet lips of Lenore
The kiss and the greeting are vanished and o'er.

From man to man all wildly she ran
With a swift and searching eye;
But she felt alone in the mighty mass,
As it crushed and crowded by:
On hurried the troop,—a gladsome group,—
And proudly the tall plumes wave and droop:
She tore her hair and she turned her round,
And madly she dashed her against the ground.

Her mother clasped her tenderly
 With soothing words and mild :
 " My child, may God look down on thee,—
 God comfort thee, my child."
 " Oh ! mother, mother ! gone is gone !
 I reckon no more how the world runs on :
 What pity to me does God impart ?
 Woe, woe, woe ! for my heavy heart ! "

" Help, Heaven, help and favour her !
 Child, utter an Ave Marie !
 Wise and great are the doings of God ;
 He loves and pities thee."
 " Out, mother, out, on the empty lie !
 Doth he heed my despair,—doth he list to my cry ?
 What boots it now to hope or to pray ?
 The night is come,—there is no more day."

" Help, Heaven, help ! who knows the Father
 Knows surely that he loves his child :
 The bread and the wine from the hand divine
 Shall make thy tempered grief less wild."
 " Oh ! mother, dear mother ! the wine and the bread
 Will not soften the anguish that bows down my head ;
 For bread and for wine it will yet be as late
 That his cold corpse creeps from the grim grave's gate,"

" What if the traitor's false faith failed,
 By sweet temptation tried,—
 What if in distant Hungary
 He clasp another bride ?—
 Despise the fickle fool, my girl,
 Who hath ta'en the pebble and spurned the pearl :
 While soul and body shall hold together
 In his perjured heart shall be stormy weather."

" Oh ! mother, mother ! gone is gone,
 And lost will still be lost !
 Death, death is the goal of my weary soul,
 Crushed and broken and crost.
 Spark of my life ! down, down to the tomb :
 Die away in the night, die away in the gloom !
 What pity to me does God impart ?
 Woe, woe, woe ! for my heavy heart ! "

" Help, Heaven, help, and heed her not,
 For her sorrows are strong within ;
 She knows not the words that her tongue repeats,—
 Oh ! count them not for sin !
 Cease, cease, my child, thy wretchedness,
 And think on the promised happiness ;
 So shall thy mind's calm ecstasy
 Be a hope and a home and a bridegroom to thee."

"My mother, what is happiness?

My mother, what is Hell?

With William is my happiness,—

Without him is my Hell!

Spark of my life! down, down to the tomb:

Die away in the night, die away in the gloom!

Earth and Heaven, and Heaven and earth,

Reft of William are nothing worth."

Thus grief racked and tore the breast of Lenore,

And was busy at her brain;

Thus rose her cry to the Power on high,

To question and arraign:

Wringing her hands and beating her breast,—

Tossing and rocking without any rest;—

Till from her light veil the moon shone through,

And the stars leapt out on the darkling blue.

But hark to the clatter and the pat pat patter

Of a horse's heavy hoof!

How the steel clanks and rings as the rider springs!

How the echo shouts aloof!

While slightly and lightly the gentle bell

Tingles and jingles softly and well;

And low and clear through the door plank thin

Comes the voice without to the ear within:

"Holla! holla! unlock the gate;

Art waking, my bride, or sleeping?

Is thy heart still free and still faithful to me?

Art laughing, my bride, or weeping?"

"Oh! wearily, William, I've waited for you,—

Woefully watching the long day through,—

With a great sorrow sorrowing

For the cruelty of your tarrying."

"Till the dead midnight we saddled not,—

I have journeyed far and fast—

And hither I come to carry thee back

Ere the darkness shall be past."

"Ah! rest thee within till the night's more calm;

Smooth shall thy couch be, and soft, and warm:

Hark to the winds, how they whistle and rush

Through the twisted twine of the hawthorn-bush."

"Through the hawthorn-bush let whistle and rush,—

Let whistle, child, let whistle!

Mark the flash fierce and high of my steed's bright eye,

And his proud crest's eager bristle.

Up, up and away! I must not stay:

Mount swiftly behind me! up, up and away!

An hundred miles must be ridden and sped

Ere we may lie down in the bridal-bed."

"What! ride an hundred miles to-night,
 By thy mad fancies driven!
 Dost hear the bell with its sullen swell,
 As it rumbles out eleven?"
 "Look forth! look forth! the moon shines bright:
 We and the dead gallop fast through the night.
 'Tis for a wager I bear thee away
 To the nuptial couch ere break of day."

"Ah! where is the chamber, William dear,
 And William, where is the bed?"
 "Far, far from here: still, narrow, and cool;
 Plank and bottom and lid."
 "Hast room for me?"—"For me and thee;
 Up, up to the saddle right speedily!
 The wedding-guests are gathered and met,
 And the door of the chamber is open set."

She busked her well, and into the selle
 She sprang with nimble haste,—
 And gently smiling, with a sweet beguiling,
 Her white hands clasped his waist:—
 And hurry, hurry! ring, ring, ring!
 To and fro they sway and swing;
 Snorting and snuffing they skim the ground,
 And the sparks spurt up, and the stones run round.

Here to the right and there to the left
 Flew fields of corn and clover,
 And the bridges flashed by to the dazzled eye,
 As rattling they thundered over.
 "What ails my love? the moon shines bright:
 Bravely the dead men ride through the night.
 Is my love afraid of the quiet dead?"
 "Ah! no;—let them sleep in their dusty bed!"

On the breeze cool and soft what tune floats aloft,
 While the crows wheel overhead?—
 Ding dong! ding dong! 'tis the sound, 'tis the song,—
 "Room, room for the passing dead!"
 Slowly the funeral-train drew near,
 Bearing the coffin, bearing the bier;
 And the chime of their chaunt was hissing and harsh,
 Like the note of the bull-frog within the marsh.

"You bury your corpse at the dark midnight,
 With hymns and bells and wailing;—
 But I bring home my youthful wife
 To a bride-feast's rich regaling.
 Come, chorister, come with thy choral throng,
 And solemnly sing me a marriage-song;
 Come, friar, come,—let the blessing be spoken,
 That the bride and the bridegroom's sweet rest be unbroken."

Died the dirge and vanished the bier :—
 Obedient to his call,
 Hard hard behind, with a rush like the wind,
 Came the long steps' pattering fall :
 And ever further ! ring, ring, ring !
 To and fro they sway and swing ;
 Snorting and snuffing they skim the ground,
 And the sparks spurt up, and the stones run round.

How flew to the right, how flew to the left,
 Trees, mountains in the race !
 How to the left, and the right and the left,
 Flew town and market-place !
 " What ails my love ? the moon shines bright :
 Bravely the dead men ride through the night.
 Is my love afraid of the quiet dead ? "
 " Ah ! let them alone in their dusty bed ! "

See, see, see ! by the gallows-tree,
 As they dance on the wheel's broad hoop,
 Up and down, in the gleam of the moon
 Half lost, an airy group :—
 " Ho ! ho ! mad mob, come hither amain,
 And join in the wake of my rushing train ;—
 Come, dance me a dance, ye dancers thin,
 Ere the planks of the marriage-bed close us in."

And hush, hush, hush ! the dreamy rout
 Came close with a ghastly bustle,
 Like the whirlwind in the hazel-bush,
 When it makes the dry leaves rustle :
 And faster, faster ! ring, ring, ring !
 To and fro they sway and swing ;
 Snorting and snuffing they skim the ground,
 And the sparks spurt up, and the stones run round.

How flew the moon high overhead,
 In the wild race madly driven !
 In and out, how the stars danced about,
 And reeled o'er the flashing heaven !
 " What ails my love ? the moon shines bright :
 Bravely the dead men ride through the night.
 Is my love afraid of the quiet dead ? "
 " Alas ! let them sleep in their dusty bed."

" Horse, horse ! meseems 'tis the cock's shrill note,
 And the sand is well nigh spent ;
 Horse, horse, away ! 'tis the break of day,—
 'Tis the morning air's sweet scent.
 Finished, finished is our ride :
 Room, room for the bridegroom and the bride !
 At last, at last, we have reached the spot,
 For the speed of the dead man has slackened not ! "

And swiftly up to an iron gate
 With reins relaxed they went ;
 At the rider's touch the bolts flew back,
 And the bars were broken and bent ;
 The doors were burst with a deafening knell,
 And over the white graves they dashed pell-mell :
 The tombs around looked grassy and grim,
 As they glimmered and glanced in the moonlight dim.

But see ! but see ! in an eyelid's beat,
 Townoo ! a gnastiy wonder i
 The norseman's jerkin, piece by piece,
 Dropped off like brittle tinder !
 Fleshless and hairless, a naked skull,
 The sight of his weird head was horrible ;
 The lifelike mask was there no more,
 And a scythe and a sandglass the skeleton bore.

Loud snorted the horse as he plunged and reared,
 And the sparks were scattered round :—
 What man shall say if he vanished away,
 Or sank in the gaping ground ?
 Groans from the earth and shrieks in the air !
 Howling and wailing everywhere !
 Half dead, half living, the soul of Lenore
 Fought as it never had fought before.

The churchyard troop,—a ghostly group,—
 Close round the dying girl ;
 Out and in they hurry and spin
 Through the dance's weary whirl :
 " Patience, patience, when the heart is breaking ;
 With thy God there is no question-making :
 Of thy body thou art quit and free :
 Heaven keep thy soul eternally ! "

HENRY THE LEPER

A SWABIAN MIRACLE-RHYME

BY HARTMANN VON AUË (A.D. 1100—1200)

*Hartmann von Auë, the fame went,
Was a good knight, and well acquent
With books in every character.
Having sought this many a year,
He found at length a record fit,
As far as he apprehendeth it,
To smoothe the rugged paths uneven,
To glorify God which is in Heaven,
And gain kind thoughts from each true hear
For himself as also for his art.*

*Unto your ears this song sings he,
And begs, an you hear it patiently,
That his reward be held in store ;
And that whoso, when his days are o'er,
Shall read and understand this book,
For the writer unto God may look,
Praying that God may be his goal
And the place of rest to his poor soul.
That man his proper shrift shall win
Who prayeth for his brother's sin.*

PART I

ONCE on a time, rhymeth the rhyme,
In Swabia-land once on a time,
There was a nobleman sojourning,
Unto whose nobleness everything
Of virtue and high-hearted excellence
Worthy his line and his large pretence
With plentiful measure was meted out :
The land rejoiced in him round about.
He was like a prince in his governing—
In his wealth he was like a king ;
But most of all by the fame far-flown
Of his great knightliness was he known,
North and south, upon land and sea.
By his name he was Henry of the Lea.

All things whereby the truth grew dim
 Were held as hateful foes with him :
 By solemn oath was he bounden fast
 To shun them while his life should last.
 In honour all his days went by :
 Therefore his soul might look up high
 To honourable authority.

A paragon of all graciousness,
 A blossoming branch of youthfulness,
 A looking-glass to the world around,
 A stainless and priceless diamond,
 Of gallant 'haviour a beautiful wreath,
 A home when the tyrant menaceth,
 A buckler to the breast of his friend,
 And courteous without measure or end ;
 Whose deeds of arms 'twere long to tell ;
 Of precious wisdom a limpid well,
 A singer of ladies every one,
 And very lordly to look upon
 In feature and bearing and countenance :—
 Say, failed he in anything, perchance,
 The summit of all glory to gain
 And the lasting honour of all men ?

Alack ! the soul that was up so high
 Dropped down into pitiful misery ;
 The lofty courage was stricken low,
 The steady triumph stumbled in woe,
 And the world-joy was hidden in the dust,
 Even as all such shall be and must.
 He whose life in the senses centreth
 Is already in the shadow of death.
 The joys, called great, of this under-state
 Burn up the bosom early and late ;
 And their shining is altogether vain,
 For it bringeth anguish and trouble and pain.
 The torch that flames for men to see
 And wasteth to ashes inwardly
 Is verily but an imaging
 Of man's own life, the piteous thing.
 The whole is brittleness and mishap :
 We sit and dally in Fortune's lap
 Till tears break in our smiles betwixt,
 And the shallow honey-draught be mix'd
 With sorrow's wormwood fathom-deep.
 Oh ! rest not therefore, man, nor sleep :—
 In the blossoming of thy flower-crown
 A sword is raised to smite thee down.

Even with Earl Henry it was thus :
 Though gladsome and very glorious
 Was the manner of his life, yet God
 Upon his spirit's fulness trod.
 The curse that fell was heavy and deep—
 A thunderbolt in the hour of sleep.
 His body, whose beauty was so much,
 Was turned unto loathing and reproach,—
 Full of foul sores, increasing fast,
 Which grew into leprosy at last.

Ages ago the Lord even so
Ordained that Job should be brought low,
To prove him if in such distress
He would hold fast his righteousness.
The great rich Earl, who otherwhile
Met but man's praise and woman's smile,
Was now no less than out-thrust quite.
The day of the world hath a dark night.
What time Lord Henry wholly knew
The stound that he was come into,
And saw folk shun him as he went,
And his pains food for merriment,
Then did he, as often it is done
By those whom sorrow falleth on—
He wrapped not round him as a robe
The patience that was found in Job.
For holy Job meet semblance took,
And bowed him under God's rebuke,
Which had given to him the world's reverse,
And the shame, and the anguish, and the curse,
Only to snatch away his soul
From emptiness and earth's control :
Therefore his soul had triumphing
Inmost at the troublous thing.

In such wise Henry bore him not ;
Its duteousness his heart forgot ;
His pride waxed hard and kept its place,
But the glory departed from his face,
And that which was his strength grew weak.
The hand that smote him on the cheek
Was all too heavy. It was night
Now, and his sun withdrew its light.
To the pride of his uplifted thought
Much woe the weary knowledge brought
That the pleasant way his feet did wend
Was all passed o'er and had an end.
The day wherein his years had begun
Went in his mouth with a malison.
As the ill grew stronger and more strong,
There was but hope bore him along :
Even yet to hope he was full fain
That gold might help him back again
Thither whence God had cast him out.
Ah ! weak to strive and little stout
'Gainst Heaven the strength that he possess'd.
North and south, and east and west,
Far and wide from every side,
Mediciners well proved and tried
Came to him at the voice of his woe ;
But, mused and pondered they ever so,
They could but say, for all their care,
That he must be content to bear
The burthen of the anger of God :
For him there was none other road.
Already was his heart nigh down,
When yet to him one chance was shown ;
For in Salerno dwelt, folk said,
A leach who still might lend him aid,
Albeit unto his body's cure
All such had been as nought before.

Up rose fresh-hearted the sick man,
 And sought the great physician,
 And told him all, and prayed him hard,
 With the proffer of a rich reward,
 To take away his grief's foul cause.
 Then said the leach without a pause,
 "There is one means might healing yield,
 Yet will you ever be unheal'd."

And Henry said, "Say on; define
 Your thoughts; your words are as thick wine,
 Some means may bring recovery?—
 I will recover! Verily,
 Unto your will my will shall bend,
 So this mine anguish pass and end."

Then said the leach, "Give ear to me:
 Thus stands it with your misery.
 Albeit there be a means of health,
 From no man shall you win such wealth;
 Many have it, yet none will give;
 You shall lack it all the days you shall live;—
 Strength gets it not; valour gains it not;
 Nor with gold nor with silver is it bought.
 Then, since God heedeth not your plaint,
 Accept God's will and be content."

"Woe's me!" did Henry's speech begin;
 "Your pastime do you take herein,
 To snatch the last hope from my sight?
 Riches are mine, and mine is might,—
 Why cast away such golden chance
 As waiteth on my deliverance?
 You shall grow rich in succouring me:
 Tell me the means, what they may be."

Quoth the leach, "Then know them, what they are;
 Yet still all hope must stand afar.
 Truly if the cure for your care
 Might be gotten anyway anywhere,
 Did it hide in the furthest parts of earth,
 This-wise I had not sent you forth.
 But all my knowledge hath none avail;
 There is but one thing would not fail:—
 An innocent virgin for to find,
 Chaste, and modest, and pure in mind,
 Who, to save you from death, might choose
 Her own young body's life to lose:
 The heart's blood of the excellent maid—
 That and nought else can be your aid.
 But there is none will be won thereby
 For the love of another's life to die."

'Twas then poor Henry knew indeed
 That from his ill he might not be freed,
 Sith that no woman he might win
 Of her own will to act herein.
 Thus gat he but an ill return
 For the journey he made unto Salerne,

And the hope he had upon that day
Was snatched from him and rent away.
Homeward he hied him back : full fain
With limbs in the dust he would have lain.
Of his substance—lands and riches both—
He rid himself ; even as one doth
Who the breath of the last life of his hope
Once and for ever hath rendered up.
To his friends he gave, and to the poor ;
Unto God praying evermore
The spirit that was in him to save,
And make his bed soft in the grave.
What still remained, aside he set
For Holy Church's benefit.
Of all that heretofore was his
Nought held he for himself, I wis,
Save one small house, with byre and field :
There from the world he lived conceal'd,—
There lived he and awaited Death,
Who, being awaited, lingereth.
Pity and ruth his troubles found
Always through all the country round.
Who heard him named, had sorrow deep,
And for his piteous sake would weep.

PART II

The little farm, with herd and field,
Now, as it had been erst, was till'd
By a poor man of simple make
Whose heart right seldom had the ache.
A happy soul, and well content
With every chance that fortune sent,
Being equal in fortune's pitch
Even unto him that is rich,—
For that his master's kindly will
Set limit to his labour still,
And without cumbrance and in peace
He lived upon the field's increase.
With him poor Henry, trouble-press'd,
Dwelt, and to dwell with him was rest.
In grateful wise, neglecting nought,
Still was the peasant's service wrought :
Cheerily, both in heart and look,
The trouble and the toil he took,
Which, new as each day dawned anew,
For Henry he must bear and do.

With favour which to blessings ran,
God looked upon the worthy man :
He gave him strength to aid his life,
A sturdy heart, an honest wife,
And children such as bring to be
That a man's breast is brimmed with glee.
Among them was a little maid,
Red-cheeked, in yellow locks arrayed,
Whose tenth year was just passing her ;
With eyes most innocently clear,
Sweet smiles that soothe, sweet tones that lull ;
Of gracious semblance wonderful.

For her sick lord the dear good child
 Was full of tender thoughts and mild.
 Rarely from sitting at his feet
 She rose; because his speech was sweet,
 To serve him she was proud and glad.
 Great fear her little playmates had
 At the sight of the loathly wight;
 But she, as often as she might,
 Went to him and with him would stay;
 And her heart unto him alway
 Clave as a child's heart cleaves: his pain
 And grief that ever must remain,
 With childish grace she soothed the while,
 And sat her at his feet with a smile.

And Henry loved the little one
 Who had such thought his woes upon,
 And he would buy her baubles bright
 Such as to children give delight:
 Nought else to peace his heart could lift
 Like her innocent gladness at the gift.
 A riband sometimes, broad and fair,
 To twine with the tresses of her hair,
 Or a looking-glass, or a little ring,
 Or a girdle-clasp;—at anything
 She was so thankful, was so pleased,
 That in some sort his pain was eased,
 And he would even say jestingly,
 His own good little wife was she.
 Seldom she left him long alone,
 Winning him from his inward moan
 With love and childish trustfulness;
 Her joyous seeming ne'er grew less;
 She was a balm unto his breast,—
 Unto his eyes she was shade and rest.

Already were three years outwring,
 And still his torment o'er him hung,
 And still in death ceased not his life.

It chanced the peasant and his wife,
 And his two little daughters, sate
 Together when the day was late,
 Their talk was all upon their lord,
 And how the help they could afford
 Was joy to them, and of the woe
 They suffered for his sake,—yet how
 His death, they feared, might bring them worse.
 They thought that in the universe
 No lord could be so good as he,
 And if but once they lived to see
 Another inherit of their friend,
 That all their welfare needs must end.

Then to his lord the peasant spake.
 "Question, dear master, I would make,
 So you permit me, of the cause
 Wherefore thus long you have made pause
 From seeking help from such as win
 Worship by lore of medicine,
 And famous are both near and far.

One such might yet break down the bar
That shuts you from your health's estate.
Wherefore, dear master, should you wait?"

Then sighs from the soul of the sick man
Pressed outward, and his tears began;
They were so sore, that when he spake
It seemed as though his heart would break.

"From God this woful curse," he said,
"Wofully have I merited,
Whose mind but to world-vanities
Looked, and but thought how best to be
Wondrous in the thinking of men:
Worship I laboured to attain
By wealth, which God in His great views
Had given me for another use.
God's self I had well-nigh forgot,
The moulder of my human lot,
Whose gifts, ill ta'en, though well bestow'd,
Hindered me from the heaven-road;
Till I at length, lost here as there,
Am chosen unto shame and despair,
His wrath's insufferable weight
Made me to know Him—but too late.
From bad to worse, from worse to worst,
At length I am cast forth and curs'd:
The whole world from my side doth flee;
The wretchedest insulteth me;
Looking on me, each ruffian
Accounts himself the better man,
And turns his visage from the sight,
As though I brought him bane and blight.
Therefore may God reward thee, thou
Who dost bear with me even now,
Not scorning him whose sore distress
No more may guerdon faithfulness.
And yet, however kind and true
The deeds thy goodness bids thee do,—
Still, spite of all, it must at heart
Rejoice thee when my breath shall part.
How am I outcast and forlorn!—
That I, who as thy lord was born,
Must now beseech thee of thy grace
To suffer me in mine evil case.
With a great blessing verily
Thou shalt be blest of God through me,
Because to me, whom God thus tries,
Pity thou grantest, Christian-wise.
The thing thou askest thou shalt know:—
All the physicians long ago
Who might bring help in any kind
I sought;—but, woe is me! to find
That all the help in all the earth
Avails not and is nothing worth.
One means there is indeed, and yet
That means nor gold nor prayers may get:—
A leach who is full of lore hath said
How it needeth that a virtuous maid
For my sake with her life should part,

And feel the steel cut to her heart :
 Only in the blood of such an one
 My curse may cease beneath the sun.
 But such an one what hope can show,
 Who her own life would thus forego
 To save my life ? Then let despair
 Bow down within my soul to bear
 The wrath God's justice doth up-pile.
 When will death come ? Woe, woe the while ! ”

Of these, poor Henry's words, each word
 The little maiden likewise heard
 Who at his feet would always sit ;
 And forgot it not, but remember'd it.
 In the hid shrine, her heart's recess,
 She held his words in silentness,
 As the mind of an angel was her mind,
 Grave and holy and Christ-inclin'd.

When in their chamber, day being past,
 Her parents, after toil, slept fast,—
 Then always with the self-same stir
 The sighs of her grief troubled her,
 At the foot of her parents' bed
 Lying, so many tears she shed
 (Bitter and many) as to make
 That they woke up and kept awake.

Her secret grieving once perceived,
 They made much marvel why she grieved,
 And questioned her of the evil chance
 To which she gave sorrowful utterance
 In her sobbings and in her under-cries :
 But nothing answered she anywise,
 Until her father bade her tell
 Openly and truly and well
 Why night by night within her bed
 So many bitter tears she shed.
 “ Alack ! ” quoth she, “ what should it be
 But our kind master's misery—
 With thoughts how soon we now must miss
 Both him and all our happiness ?
 Our solace shall be ours no more :
 There is no lord alive, be sure,
 Who, like unto him and of his worth,
 Shall bless our days with peace thenceforth.”

They answering said : “ Right words and rare
 Thou speak'st ; but it booteth not an hair
 That we should make outcry and lament :
 Brood thou no longer thereanent.
 Unto us it is pain, as unto thee,
 Perchance even more ; yet what can we
 That may avail for succouring ?
 Truly the Lord hath done this thing.”

Thus silenced they her speaking ; but
 Her soul's complaint they silenced not.
 Grief lay with her from hour to hour
 Through the long night ; nor dawn had power

To rid her of it ; all beside
 That near and about her might betide
 Seemed nought. And when sleep covered men,
 Again and again, and yet again,
 Wakeful and faithful, she would crouch
 Wearily on her little couch,
 Tossing in trouble without sign :
 And from her eyes the scalding brine
 Flowed through sick grief that wept apart ;
 As steadfastly within her heart
 She pondered on her heart's sore ache
 And on those words Earl Henry spake.
 Long with herself communing so,
 Her tears were softened in their flow ;
 Because at length her will was fix'd
 To stand his fate and him betwixt.

Where now should such a child be sought,
 Thinking even as this one thought,
 Who, rather than her lord should die,
 Chose her own death and held thereby ?

But once her purpose settled fast,
 All woe went forth from her and pass'd ;
 Her heart sat lightly in her breast,
 And one thing only gave unrest.
 Her lord's own hand, she feared, might stay
 Her footsteps from the terrible way,—
 She feared her parents strength might lack,
 And, through much loving, hold her back.
 By reason of such fears, she fell
 Into new grief unspeakable,
 And that night, as the past nights, wept,
 Waking her father where he slept.
 "Thou foolish child," thus did he say,
 "Why wilt thou weep thine eyes away
 For what no help thou hast can mend ?
 Is not this moan thou mak'st to end ?
 We would sleep ; let us sleep in peace."
 Thus chidingly he bade her cease,
 Because his thought conceived in nought
 The thing she had laid up in her thought.

Answered him the excellent maid :
 "Truly my own dear lord hath said
 That by one means he may be heal'd.
 So ye but your consenting yield,
 It is my blood that he shall have.
 I, being virgin-pure, to save
 His days, do choose the edge o' the knife,
 And my death rather than my life."

The young girl's parents lay and heard,
 And had sore grief of her spoken word ;
 And thus her father said : "How now ?
 What silly wish, child, wishest thou ?
 Thou durst not do it in very truth.
 What knows a child of these things, forsooth ?
 Ugly Death thou hast never seen :
 Were he once to near thee, I ween—

Didst thou view the pit of the sepulchre—
 Thy face would change and thy flesh fear,
 And thy soul within thee would shake,
 And thy weak hands would toil to break
 The grasp of the monster foul and grim,
 Drawing thee from thyself to him.
 Leave thy words and thy weeping too ;
 What cannot be done, seek not to do."

"Nay, father mine," replied the child,
 "Though my words may be counted wild,
 Well I know that the body's death
 Is a torture and tortureth.
 Yet truly this is truth no less :
 He who is plagued with sharp distress,
 Who hates his life, having but woe,—
 To him the end cometh, even so,
 When for all the curses that he hath pass'd,
 He 'scapes not the curse of death at last,
 What booteth it him a long-drawn life
 To have traversed in trouble and in strife,
 If nothing after all he can win,
 Except, being old, to enter in
 At the self-same door which years ago
 He might more firmly have passed through ?
 But scantily may the soul see good,—
 So rough is world-driving and so rude ;
 And, good once ended, hope once lorn,
 Best it were I had not been born.
 Therefore my lips give praise to God,
 Who this great blessing hath bestow'd
 On me,—by loss of body and limb,
 To have the life that lives with Him.
 'Twere ill done, did ye make me loth
 From what unto me and unto both
 Bringeth joy and prosperity,
 Gaining the crown of Christ for me ;
 And you, from every troublous thing
 That threateneth you, delivering.
 The generous master ye shall keep
 Who leaves you undisturbed to reap.
 The fruits our little field doth grow,
 Earn'd, father, in the sweat of thy brow.
 With you, while he liveth, it shall stay ;
 He is good ; he will not drive you away.
 But if we now should let him die,
 Our ruining hasteneth thereby :
 The thought whereof doth make^{ye} me give
 My own young life that he may live.
 To such a choice, which profits all,
 Meseems your chiding should be small."

Then the mother broke forth at last,
 Finding her daughter's purpose fast.
 "Think, my own child,—daughter mine, think
 Of the bitter cup that I had to drink,
 Of the pain that I suffered once for thee ;
 And, thinking, turn thyself unto me.
 Is this the guerdon thou dost give
 Even to the womb that bade thee live ?

Her in pain must I lose again
Whom I bore and brought forth in pain?
Wouldst leave thy parents for thy lord?
This were hatred of God and of His word.
Clean from thy mind is the word gone
Which God pronounced? Ponder thereon:
'Listen,' it is written, 'to their command,
That thy days may be long in the land.'
Lo! how corrupt must be thine heart!—
It hath striven the will of God to thwart.
And sayest thou, if thou lovest thus
Thy life, good hap shall come to us?
Oh no! in us thou wilt give birth
To weariness and to scorn of earth.
In the whole world thou art alone
That which our joy is set upon.
Yes, little daughter, always dear,
'Tis thou shouldst make our gladness here;
Thou shouldst be a lamp to our life,
Our aim in the troublesome hard strife,
And a staff our falling steps to save:
In place whereof, thine own black grave
With thine own hand thou digg'st, and sad
Grow the hope and the comfort that we had,
And I must weep at thy tomb all day
Till in plague and torment I pass away.
Yet oh! whate'er our ills may be,
So much and more shall God do to thee."

Then the pious maid answered and said:—
"O mother, that in my soul art laid,
How should I not at all times here
See the path of my duty clear,
When at all times my thankful mind
Meeteth thy love, tender and kind,
That kindly and tenderly ministers?
Of a verity I am young in years;
Yet this I know: what is mine, to wit,
Is mine but since thou gavest it.
And if the people grant me praise,
And look with favour in my face,
Yet my heart's tale is continual—
That only thee must I thank for all
Which it pleaseth them to perceive in me;
And that ne'er a thing should be brought to be
By myself on myself, save such
As thou wouldst permit without reproach.
Mother, it was thou that didst give
These limbs and the life wherewith I live,—
And is it thou wouldst grudge my soul
Its white robe and its aureole?
The knowledge of evil in my breast
Hath not yet been, nor sin's unrest;
Therefore, the road being overtrod,
I know I shall have portion with God.
Say not that this is foolishness;
No hand but God's hand is in this:
Him must thou thank, Whose grace doth cleanse
My heart from earth's desire, till hence
It longs with a mighty will to go
Ere sin be known that's yet to know.

Well it needs that the joys of earth
 (Deemed oftentimes of a priceless worth
 By man should be counted excellent :
 How otherwise might he rest content
 With anything but Christ's perfecting ?
 Oh ! to such reeds let me not cling !
 God knows how vain seem to my sight
 The bliss of this world and the delight ;
 For the delight turneth amiss,
 And soul's tribulation hath the bliss.
 What is their life ?—a gasp for breath ;
 And their guerdon ?—but the burthen of death.
 One thing alone is sure :—should peace
 Come to-day, with to-morrow it shall cease ;
 Till the last evil thing at last
 Shall find us out, and our days be past.
 Nor birth nor wealth succoureth then,
 Nor strength, nor the courage of strong men,
 Nor honour, nor fealty, nor truth.
 Out and alack ! our life, our youth,
 Are but dust only and empty smoke ;
 We are laden branches that the winds rock.
 Woe to the fool who layeth hold
 On earth's vain shadows manifold !
 The marsh-fire gleam, as it hath shone,
 Still shines, luring his footsteps on :
 But he is dead ere he reach the goal,
 And with his flesh dieth his soul.
 Therefore, dear mother, be at rest,
 And labour not to make manifest
 That for my sake thou hold'st me here :
 But let one silence make it clear
 That my father's will is joined with thine.
 Alas ! though I kept this life of mine
 'Tis verily but a little while
 That ye may smile, or that I may smile.
 Two years perchance, perchance even three,
 In happiness I shall keep with ye :
 Then must our lord be surely dead,
 And sorrow and sighing find us instead ;
 And your want shall your will withhold
 From giving me any dowry-gold,
 And no man will take me for his wife ;
 And my life shall be trouble-rife,
 And very hateful, and worse than death.
 Or though this thing that threateneth
 Were 'scaped, and ere our good lord died
 Some bridegroom chose me for his bride,—
 Though then, ye think, all is made smooth,
 Yet the bad is but made worse, forsooth ;
 For even with love, woes should not cease,
 And not to love were the end of peace.
 Thus through ill and grief I struggle still,
 What to attain ? Even grief and ill.
 In this strait, One would set me free,
 My soul and my body asking of me,
 That I may be with Him where He is.
 Hold me not ; I would make myself His.
 He only is the true Husbandman ;
 The labour ends well which He began ;
 Ever His plough goeth aright ;

His barns fill ; for His fields there is no blight ;
In His lands life dies not anywhere ;
Never a child sorroweth there ;
There heat is not, neither is cold ;
There the lapse of years maketh not old ;
But peace hath its dwelling there for aye,
And abideth, and shall not pass away.
Thither, yea, thither let me go,
And be rid of this shadow-place below,—
This place laid waste like a waste plain,
Where nothing is but torment and pain,
Where a day's blight falleth upon
The work of a year, and it is gone ;
Where ruinous thunder lifts its voice,
And where the harvest may not rejoice.
You love me ? Oh let your love be seen,
And labour no more to circumvene
My heart's desire for the happy place !
To the Lord let me lift my face,—
Even unto Jesus Christ my Friend,
Whose gracious mercies have no end,
In whose name Love is the world's dear Lord,
And by whom not the vilest is abhorr'd.
Alike with Him is man's estate,—
As the rich the poor, the small as the great :
Were I a queen, be sure that He
With more joy could not welcome me.
Yet from your hearts do I turn my heart ?
Nay, from your love I will not part,
But rejoice to be subject unto you.
Then count not my thought to be untrue
Because I deem, if I do this thing,
It is your weal I am furthering.
Whoso, men say, another's self
Heaping, pulls want upon himself,—
Whoso his neighbour's fame would crown
By bringing ruin upon his own,—
His friendship is surely overmuch.
But this my purpose is none such :
For though ye too shall gain relief,
It is myself I would serve in chief.
O mother dear, weep not, nor mourn :
My duty is this ; let it be borne.
Take heart,—thou hast other children left ;
In theirs thy life shall be less bereft ;
They shall comfort thee for the loss of me :
Then my own gain let me bring to be,
And my lord's ; for to him upon the earth
This only can be of any worth.
Nor think that thou shalt look on my grave ;
That pain, at least, thou canst never have ;
Very far away is the land
Where that must be done which I have plann'd.
God guerdoneth ; in God is my faith ;
He shall loosen me from the bonds of Death."

PART III

All trembling had the parents heard
 Death by their daughter thus preferr'd
 With a language so very marvellous
 (Surely no child reasoneth thus),
 Whose words between her lips made stir,
 As though the Spirit were poured on her
 Which giveth knowledge of tongues unknown.
 So strange was every word and tone,
 They knew not how they might answer it,
 Except by striving to submit
 To Him Who had made the child's heart rife
 With the love of death and the scorn of life.
 Therefore they said, silently still,
 "All-perfect One, it is Thy will."
 With fear and doubt's most bitter ban
 They were a-cold; so the poor man
 And the poor woman sat alway
 In their bed, without yea or nay.
 Ever alack! they had no speech
 The new dawn of their thought to reach.
 With a wild sorrow unexpress'd
 The mother caught the child to her breast;
 But the father after long interval
 Said, though his soul smote him withal,
 "Daughter, if God is in thine heart,
 Heed not our grieving, but depart."

Then the sweet maid smiled quietly;
 And soon i' the morning hastened she
 To the room where the sick man slept.
 Up to his bed she softly stepp'd,
 Saying, "Do you sleep, my dear lord?"

"No, little wife," was his first word,
 "But why art thou so early to-day?"

"Grief made that I could not keep away—
 The great grief that I have for you."

"God be with thee, faithful and true!
 Often to ease my suffering
 Thou hast done many a gracious thing.
 But it lasteth; it shall be always so."

Then said the girl: "On my troth, no!
 Take courage and comfort; it will turn,
 The fire that in your flesh doth burn
 One means, you know, would quench it at once.
 My mind climbs to conclusions.
 Not a day will I make delay,
 Now I am 'ware of the one way.
 Dear lord, I have heard yourself expound
 How, if only a maiden could be found
 To lose her life for you willingly,
 From all your pains you might yet be free.
 God He knoweth, I will do this:
 My worth is not as yours, I wis."

Wondering and sore astonied,
 The poor sick man looked at the maid,
 Whose face smiled down unto his face,
 While the tears gave each other chase
 Over his cheeks from his weary eyes,
 Till he made answer in this wise :—
 " Trust me, this death is not, my child,
 So tender a trouble and so mild
 As thou, in thy reckoning, reckonest.
 Thou didst keep madness from my breast,
 And help me when other help was none :
 I thank thee for all that thou hast done,
 (May God unto thee be merciful
 For thy tenderness in the day of dule !)
 I know thy mind, childlike and chaste,
 And the innocent spirit that thou hast ;
 But nothing more will I ask of thee
 Than thou without wrong mayst do for me.
 Long ago have I given up
 The strife for deliverance and the hope ;
 So that now in thy faithfulness
 I pleasure me with a soul at peace,
 Wishing not thy sweet life withdrawn
 Sith my own life I have foregone.
 Too suddenly, little wife, beside,
 Like a child's, doth thine heart decide
 On this which hath enter'd into it,—
 Unsure if thou shalt have benefit.
 In little space sore were thy case
 If once with Death thou wert face to face ;
 And heavy and dark would the thing seem
 Which thou hast desired in thy dream.
 Therefore, good child, go in again :
 Soon, I know, thou wilt count as vain
 This thing to which thy mind is wrought,
 When once thou hast ponder'd in thy thought
 How hard a thing it is to remove
 From the world and from the home of one's love.
 And think too what a grievous smart
 Hereby must come to thy parents' heart,
 And how bitter to them would be the stroke.
 Shall I bring this thing on the honest folk
 By whose pity my woes have been beguiled ?
 To thy parents' counselling, my child,
 For evermore look that thou incline :
 So sorrow of heart shall not be thine."

When thus he had answer'd tenderly,
 Forth came the parents, who hard by
 Had hearken'd to the speech that he spake.

Albeit his heart was nigh to break
 With the load under which it bow'd,
 The father spake these words aloud :
 " God knows," said he, " we do willingly,
 Dear master, aught that may vantage thee
 Who hast been so good to us and so kind.
 If God have in very truth design'd
 That this young child should for thee atone,—
 Then, being God's will, let it be done.

Yea, through His power she hath been brought
 To count the years of her youth for nought ;
 And by no childish whim is she led
 To her grave, as thou hast imaginèd.
 To-day, alack ! is the third day
 That with prayers we might not put away
 She hath sorely entreated us that we
 Would grant her the grace to die for thee.
 By her words exceeding wonderful,
 Our sharp resistance hath waxed dull,
 Till now we may no longer dare
 To pause from the granting of her prayer."

When the sick man thus found that each
 Spoke with good faith the selfsame speech,
 And that in earnest the young maid
 Proffered her life for his body's aid,—
 There rose, the little room within,
 Of sobbing and sorrow a great din,
 And a strange dispute, that side and this,
 In manner as there seldom is.
 The Earl, at length winning unto
 The means of health, raised much ado,
 Loudly lamenting that his cure
 From sickness should be thus made sure.
 The parents grieved with a bitter woe
 That their dear child should leave them so,
 While yet they pray'd of him constantly
 To grant her prayer that she should die.
 And she meanwhile whose life-long years
 It was to cost, shed sorrowful tears
 For dread lest he whom she would save
 Should deny to her the boon of the grave.

Thus they who, in pure faith's control
 And in the strength of a godly soul,
 Vied one with the other, sat there now,
 Their eyes all wet with the bitter flow,
 Each urging of what he had to say,
 None yielding at all, nor giving way.
 The sick man sat in thought a space,
 Between his hands bowing his face,
 While the others, with supplicating tone,
 Softly besought him one by one.
 Then his head at last he lifted up,
 And let his tears fall without stop,
 And said finally : " So let it be.
 Shall I, who am one, stand against three ?
 Now know I surely that God's word,
 Which speaks in silence, ye have heard ;
 And that this thing must be very fit,
 And even as God hath appointed it.
 He, seeing my heart, doth read thereon
 That I yield but to Him alone,—
 Not to the wish that for my sake
 Her grave this gracious child should make."

Then the maid sprang to him full fain,
 As though she had gotten a great gain ;

And both his feet clasp'd and would kiss,—
Not for sorrow sobbing now, but for bliss :
The while her sorrowing parents went
Forth from that room to make lament,
And weep apart for the heavy load
Which yet they knew was the will of God.

Then a kirtle was given unto the maid,
Broider'd all with the silken braid,
Such as never before she had put on ;
With sables the border was bedone,
And with jewels bound about and around :
On her so fair they were fairer found
Than song of mine can make discourse.
And they mounted her on a goodly horse :
That horse was to carry her very far,—
Even to the place where the dead are.

In the taking of these gifts she smil'd.
Not any longer a silly child
She seemed, but a worshipful damozel,
Well begotten and nurtured well.
And her face had a quiet earnestness ;
And while she made ready, none the less
Did she comfort the trouble-stricken pair,
Who in awestruck wise looked on her there,
As a saintly being superior
And no daughter unto them any more.

Yet when the bitter moment came
Wherein their child must depart from them,
In sooth it was hard to separate.
The mother's grief was heavy and great,
Seeing that child lost to her, whom,
Years since, she had carried in her womb.
And the father was sorely shaken too,
Now nought remained but to bid adieu
To that young life, full of the spring,
Which must wither before the blossoming.

What made the twain more strong at length
Was the young girl's wonderful strength,
Whose calm look and whose gentle word
Blunted the sharp point of the sword.
With her mouth she was eloquent,
As if to her ear an angel bent,
Whispering her that she might say
The word which wipes all tears away.
Thus, with her parents' benison
Upon her head, forth is she gone :—
She is gone forth like to a bride,
Lifted and inwardly glorified ;
She seemed not as one that journeyeth
To the door of the house of death.

So they rode without stop or turn
By the paths that take unto Salerne.
Lo ! he is riding to new life
Whose countenance is laden and rife
With sorrow and care and great dismay.
But for her who rides the charnel-way—

Oh! up in her eyes sits the bright look
Which tells of a joy without rebuke.
With friendly speech, with cheerful jest,
She toils to give his sorrow rest,
To lighten the heavy time for him,
And shorten the road that was long and grim.

Thus on their way they still did wend
Till they were come to their journey's end.
Then prayed she of him that they might reach
That day the dwelling of the wise leach
Who had shown how his ill might be allay'd.

And it was done even as she said.
His arm in hers, went the sick man
Unto the great physician,
And brought again to his mind the thing
Whereof they had erst made questioning.
"This maid," he said, "holds purpose now
To work my cure, as thy speech did show."

But the leach held silence, as one doth
Whose heart to believe is well-nigh loth,
Even though his eyes witness a thing.
At length he said: "By whose counselling
Comes this, my child? Hast thou thought well
On that whereof this lord doth tell,
Or art thou led perforce thereto?"

"Nay," quoth the maid, "that which I do,
I do willingly; none persuadeth me;
It is, because I choose it should be."

He took her hand, silently all,
And led her through a door in the wall
Into another room that was there,
Wherein he was quite alone with her.
Then thus: "Thou poor ill-guided child,
What is it that maketh thee so wild,
Thy short life and thy little breath
Suddenly to yield up to death?
An thou art constrain'd, e'en say 'tis so,
And I swear to thee thou art free to go.
Remember this—how that thy blood
Unto the Earl can bring no good
If thou sheddest it with an inward strife.
Vain it were to bleed out thy life,
If still, when the whole hath come to pass,
Thy lord should be even as he was.
Bethink thee—and consider thereof—
How the pains thou tempt'st are hard and rough.
First, with thy limbs naked and bare
Before mine eyes thou must appear,—
So needs shall thy maiden shame be sore:
Yet still must the woe be more and more,
What time thou art bound by heel and arm,
And with sharp hurt and with grievous harm
I cut from out thy breast the part
That is most alive—even thine heart.

With thine eyes thou shalt surely see
The knife ere it enter into thee,—
Thou shalt feel worse than death's worst sting
Ere the heart be drawn forth quivering.
How deemest thou? Canst thou suffer this?
Alack, poor wretch! there is dreadfulness
Even in the thought. If only once
Thou do blench or shrink when the blood runs—
If thou do repent but by an hair,—
It is bootless all,—in vain the care,
In vain the scathe, in vain the death.
Now what is the word thy free choice saith?"

She look'd at him as at a friend,
And answer'd: "Sir, unto that end—
To wit, my choice—I had ponder'd hard
Long ere I was borne hitherward.
I thank you, sir, that of your heart's ruth
You have warn'd me thus; and of a truth,
By all the words that you have said
I well might feel dispirited,—
The more that even yourself, meseems,
Are frightened by these idle dreams
From the work you should perform for the Earl.
Oh! it might hardly grace a girl
Such cowardly reasoning to use!
Pardon me, sir; I cannot choose
But laugh, that you, with your mastership,
Should have a courage less firm and deep
Than a pitiful maiden without lore
Whose life even now ends and is o'er.
The part that is yours dare but to do,—
As for me, I have trust to undergo.
Methinks the dule and the drearihead
You tell me of, must be sharp indeed,
Sith the mere thought is so troublesome.
Believe me, I never should have come,
Had I not known of myself alone
What the thing was to be undergone,—
Were I not sure that, abash'd no whit,
This soul of mine could be through with it.
Yea, verily, by your sorrowing,
My poor heart's courage you can bring
Just to such sorrowful circumstance
As though I were going to the dance.
Worshipful sir, there nothing is
That can last away without cease,—
Nought that one day's remitted doom
Can save the feeble body from.
Thus then, you see, it is cheerfully
That I do all this; and that while he
My lord, you willing, shall not die,
The endless life shall be mine thereby.
Resolve you, and so it shall be said
That the fame you have is well merited.
This brings me joy that I undertake,
Even for my dear kind master's sake,
And for what we two shall gain also,—
I, there above,—and you, here below.
Sir, inasmuch as the work is hard,
So much the more is our great reward."

Then the leach said nothing, but was dumb ;
And, marvelling much, he sought the room
Where the sick man sat in expectancy.

"New courage may be yours," quoth he ;
"For your sake she casts her life behind,
Not from empty fantasy of the mind ;
And the parting of her body and soul
Shall cleanse your limbs and make you whole."
But Henry was full of troublous thought ;
Peradventure he hearken'd not,
For he answer'd not that which was sain.
So the leach turn'd, and went out again.

Again to the maid did he repair,
And straightway lock'd the doors with care,
That Henry might not see or know
What she for his sake must undergo.
And the leach said, "Take thy raiment off."
Then was her heart joyous enough,
And she obey'd, and in little space
Stood up before the old man's face
As naked as God had fashion'd her :
Only her innocence clothèd her :
She fear'd not, and was not asham'd,
In the sight of God standing unblamed,
To whom her dear life without price
She offered up for a sacrifice.

When thus she was beheld of the leach,
His soul spake with an inward speech,
Saying that beauty so excellent
Had scarce been known since the world went.
And he conceived for the poor thing
Such an unspeakable pitying,
And such a fear on his purpose lit,
That he scarce dared to accomplish it.
Slowly he gave her his command
To lie down on a table hard at hand,
To the which he bound her with strong cords :
Then he reach'd his hand forth afterwards,
And took a broad long knife, and tried
The edge of the same on either side.
It was sharp, yet not as it should be
(He looked to its sharpness heedfully,—
Having sore grief for the piteous scathe,
And desiring to shorten her death).
Therefore it was he took a stone,
And ground the knife finely thereon.

Earl Henry heard in bitterest woe
The blade, a-whetting, come and go.
Forward he sprang ; a sudden start
Of grief for the maid struck to his heart.
He thought what a peerless soul she bore,—
And made a great haste unto the door,
And would have gone in, but it was shut.
Then his eyes burn'd, as he stood without,
In scalding tears ; transfigurèd
He felt himself ; and in the stead

Of his feebleness there was mightiness.
 "Shall she," he thought, "who my life doth bless,—
 The gracious, righteous, virtuous maid,—
 To this end be thrust down to the shade?
 Wilt thou, thou fool, force the Most High,
 That thy desire may come thereby?
 Deem'st thou that any, for good or ill,
 Can live but a day against His will?
 And if by His will thou yet shalt live,
 What more of help can her dying give?
 Sith all then is as God ordereth,
 Rest evermore in the hand of faith.
 As in past time, anger not now
 The All-powerful; seeing that thou
 Canst anger Him only. 'Tis the ways
 Of penitence lead unto grace."

He was determined immediately,
 And smote on the door powerfully,
 And cried to the leach, "Open to me!"

But the leach answer'd, "It may not be:
 I have something of weight that I must do."

Then Henry urged back upon him, "No!
 Come quickly, and open, and give o'er."

Quoth the other, "Say your say through the door."

"Not so, not so; let me enter in:
 It is my soul's rest I would win."

Then the door drew back, widely and well;
 And Henry look'd on the damozel,
 Where she lay bound, body and limb,
 Waiting Death's stroke, to conquer him.

"Hear me," said he, "worshipful sir;
 It is horrible thus to look on her:
 Rather the burthen of God's might
 I choose to suffer, than this sight.
 What I have said, that will I give;
 But let thou the brave maiden live."

PART IV

When the maiden learn'd assuredly
 That by that death she was not to die,
 And when she was loosed from the strong bands,
 A sore moan made she. With her hands
 She rent her hair; and such were her tears
 That it seem'd a great wrong had been hers.

"Woe worth the weary time!" she cried;
 "There is no pity on any side.
 Woe is me! It fades from my view—
 The recompense I was chosen to,—

The magnificent heaven-crown
 I hoped with such a hope to put on.
 Now it is I am truly dead,—
 Now it is I am truly ruinèd.
 Oh! shame and sorrowing on me,
 And shame and sorrowing on thee,
 Who the guerdon from my spirit hast riven,
 And by whose hands I am snatch'd from Heaven!
 Lo! he chooseth his own calamity,
 That so my crown may be reft from me!"

Then with sharp prayer she pray'd them there
 That still the death might be given her
 For the which she had journey'd many a mile,
 But being assured in a brief while
 That the thing she sought would be denied,
 She gazed with a piteous mien, and cried,
 Rebuking her heart-beloved lord—
 "Is all then lost that my soul implor'd?
 How faint art thou, how little brave,
 To load me with this load that I have!
 How have I been cheated with lies,
 And cozen'd with fair-seeming falsities!
 They told me thou wast honest, and good,
 And valiant, and full of noble blood,—
 The which, so help me God! was false.
 Thou art one the world strangely miscalls.
 Thou art but a weak timorous man,
 Whose soul, affrighted, fails to scan
 The strength of a woman's sufferance.
 Have I injured thee anyway, perchance?
 Say, how didst thou hear, sitting without?
 And yet meseems the wall was stout
 Betwixt us. Nay, but thou must know
 That it is to be—that it *will* be so.
 Take heed—there is no second one
 Who yet for thy life will lose her own.
 Oh! turn to me and be pitiful,
 And grudge not death to my poor soul!"

But though her suing was hard and hot,
 His firmness never fail'd him a jot;
 So that at length, against her will,
 She needs must end her cries and be still,—
 Yielding her to the loath'd decree
 That made her life a necessity.
 Lord Henry to one will was wrought,
 Fast settled in his steadfast thought:
 He clothed her again with his own hand,
 And again set forth to his native land,
 Having given large reward to the leach.
 He knew the shame and the evil speech
 And the insult he must bear,—yet bow'd
 Meekly thereto; knowing that God
 Had will'd, in his regard, each thing
 That wrought for him weal or suffering.

Thus by the damsel's help indeed
 From a foul sickness he was freed,—
 Not from his body's sore and smart,
 But from hardness and stubbornness of heart.

Then first was all that pride of his
Quite overthrown ; a better bliss
Came to his soul and dwelt with him
Than the bliss he had in the first time,—
To wit, a blithe heart's priceless gain
That looks to God through the tears of pain.

But as they rode, the righteous maid
Mourn'd and might not be comforted.
Her soul was aghast, her heart was waste,
Her wits were all confused and displac'd :
Herseem'd that the leaning on God's might
Was turn'd for her to shame and despite :
So her pure heart ceased not to pray
That the woe she had might be ta'en away.

Thus came the girl and the sick wight
To an hostel at the fall of the night.
Each in a little chamber alone,
They watch'd till many hours were gone.
The nobleman gave thanks to God
Who had turn'd him from the profitless road,
And cleansed him, by care and suffering,
From his loftiness and vain-glorying.
The damsel went down on her knees
And spake to God such words as these,—
Why thus He had put aside, and left
Out of His grace, her and her gift,—
Seeing how she had nothing more
To give but her one life bare and poor.
She prayed : " Am I not good enough,
Thou Holy One, to partake thereof ?
Then, O my God ! cleanse Thou mine heart ;
Let me not thus cease and depart :
Give me a sign, Father of mine,
That the absolving grace divine
By seeking may at length be found
While yet this earth shall hold me round."

And God, who lifts souls from the dust,
Nor turns from the spirit that hath trust,
The same look'd down with looks unloth
On the troublesome sorrow of them both,
Both whose hearts and whose life-long days
He had won to Him for glory and praise,—
Who had passed through the fire and come forth
And proved themselves salvation-worth.
The Father—He who comforteth
His patient children that have faith—
At length released these steadfast ones
From their manifold tribulations.
In wondrous wise the Earl was stripp'd
Of all his sickness while he slept ;
And when, as the sunrise smote his e'en,
He found him once more whole and clean,
He rose from his couch and sought the maid.

On the sight for which she long had pray'd,
She gazed and gazed some speechless space
And then knelt down with lifted face

And said, "The Lord God hath done this :
His was the deed—the praise be His.
With solemn thinking let me take
The life which He hath given me back."

PART V

The Earl return'd in joyful case
Unto his fathers' dwelling-place.
Every day brought back to him
A part of his joy, which had waxed dim ;
And he grew now, of face and mien,
More comely than ever he had been.
And unto all who in former years
Had been his friends and his comforters,
He told how God's all-mercifulness
Had deliver'd him out of his distress.
And they rejoiced, giving the praise
To God and His unsearchable ways.

Then thitherward full many a road
Men came, a gladsome multitude ;
They came in haste, they rode and they ran,
To welcome the gallant gentleman ;
Their own eyes they could scarce believe,
Beholding him in health and alive.
A strange sight, it may well be said,
When one revives that was counted dead.

The worthy peasant who so long
Had tended him when the curse was strong,
In the good time stay'd not away,
Nor his wife could be brought to stay.
'Twas then that after long suspense
Their labour gat its recompense.
They who had hoped no other thing
Than the sight of their lord, on entering
Saw the sweet damsel by his side,
In perfect measure satisfied,
Who caught them round with either arm,
And clave to them closely and warm.
Long time they kissed her, in good sooth—
They kissed her on her cheeks and mouth.
Within their breasts their hearts were light ;
And eyes which first laughed and were bright
Soon overbrimmed with many tears,
The tokens of the joy that was theirs.

Then the good honest Swabians
Who erst had shared the inheritance
Of the sick lord, gave back the land,
Unasked, which they had ta'en at his hand.
Him did they wholly reinstate
In every title and estate
That heretofore he had possess'd.
But ever he pondered in his breast
Upon those wondrous things which once
God wrought on his flesh and in his bones.

Nor did he in anywise forget
The friendly pair whose help, ere yet
His hours of pain were overpast,
Had stood him in such stead. The taste
Of bitter grief he had brought on them
Found such reward as best became—
He gave the little farm and the field,
With the cattle whereby they were till'd,
With servants eke, to the honest twain;
So that no fears plagued them again.
Lest any other lord should come
At length and turn them from their home.
Also his thankful favour stay'd
Evermore with the pious maid:
Many a day with her he spent,
And gave her many an ornament,
Because of what is said in my rhyme
And the love he bore her from old time.

Thus, it may be, a year went o'er:
Then all his kinsfolk urged him sore
Some worthy woman for to woo,
And bring her as his wife thereto.
And he answer'd, "Truly as I live,
This is good counsel that ye give."

So he summoned every lord his friend,
That to this matter they might bend
Such help as honest friends can bring.
And they all came at his summoning,
Everywhence, both far and near;
And eke his whole vassalage was there,—
Not a single man but was come:
It made, good sooth, a mighty sum.
And the earl stepp'd forward in their sight,
Saying, "Sirs, my mind is fixed aright
To wed even as your wills decide:
Take counsel then, and choose me a bride."
So they got together and began;
But there was a mind for every man.
Both ways they wrangled, aye and no,
As counsellors are sure to do.

Then again he spake to them and cried:
"Dear friends, now let alone the bride,
And rede me a thing. All of ye know,
Doubtless, that I, a while ago,
With a most loathsome ill was cross'd,
And appear'd to be altogether lost,
So that all people avoided me
With cursings and cruel mockery.
And yet no man scorneth me now,
Nor woman either; seeing how
God's mercy hath made me whole again.
Then tell me, I pray of ye full fain,
What I may do to His honouring
Who to mine aid hath done this thing."

And they all answered immediately:
"By word and deed it behoveth thee

To offer thyself to the Most High,
And work for Him good works thereby,
That the life He spared may be made His."

"Then," quoth the Earl, "hearken me this.
The damozel who standeth here,—
And whom I embrace, being most dear,—
She it is unto whom I owe
The grace it hath pleased God to bestow.
He saw the simple-spirited
Earnestness of the holy maid,
And even in guerdon of her truth
Gave back to me the joys of my youth,
Which seem'd to be lost beyond all doubt.
And therefore I have chosen her out
To wed with me, knowing her free.
I think that God will let this be.
But now if I fail, and not obtain,
I will never embrace woman again ;
For all I am, and all I have,
Is but a gift, sirs, that she gave.
Lo ! I enjoin ye, with God's will,
That this my longing ye fulfil :
I pray ye all, have but one voice,
And let your choice go with my choice."

Then the cries ceased, and the counter-cries,
And all the battle of advice,
And every lord, being content
With Henry's choice, granted assent.

Then the priests came, to bind as one
Two lives in bridal unison.
Into his hand they folded hers,
Not to be loosed in coming years,
And utter'd between man and wife
God's blessing on the road of their life.

Many a bright and pleasant day
The twain pursued their steadfast way,
Till, hand in hand, at length they trod
Upward to the kingdom of God.
Even as it was with them, even thus,
And quickly, it must be with us.
To such reward as theirs was then,
God help us in His Hour. Amen.

TWO SONGS FROM VICTOR HUGO'S "BURGRAVES"

I

THROUGH the long winter the rough wind tears;
 With their white garment the hills look wan.
 Love on: who cares?
 Who cares? Love on.
 My mother is dead; God's patience wears;
 It seems my chaplain will not have done.
 Love on: who cares?
 Who cares? Love on.
 The Devil, hobbling up the stairs,
 Comes for me with his ugly throng.
 Love on: who cares?
 Who cares? Love on.

II

IN the time of the civil broils
 Our swords are stubborn things.
 A fig for all the cities!
 A fig for all the kings!

The Burgrave prospereth:
 Men fear him more and more.
 Barons, a fig for his Holiness!
 A fig for the Emperor!

Right well we hold our own
 With the brand and the iron rod.
 A fig for Satan, Burgraves!
 Burgraves, a fig for God!

CAPITOLO:

A. M. SALVINI TO FRANCESCO REDI, 16—

Know then, dear Redi, (sith thy gentle heart
 Would read my riddle and my mystery,)—
 That I am thinking from men's thoughts apart;
 And that I learn deeper theology
 While my soul travails over Dante's page,
 Than with long study in the schools might be.
 Many and many things, holy and sage,
 To the dim mind his mighty words unveil,
 Thralling it with a welcome vassalage:
 Nor doth his glorious lamp flicker or fail
 By reason of that vapoury shrouding strange,
 Which in like argument may much prevail.

Through old and trodden paths he scorned to range ;
 He took the leap of Chaos ;—high, and low,
 And to the middle region's state of change.

Bright things, and dubious things, and things of woe,
 Thence to the mind he spake with pictured speech,
 Making the tongue cry out, "They must be so!"

The how and wherefore will be told of each ;
 And that his soul might take its flight and roam,
 Beatrice gave him wings of boundless reach.

O hallowed breast, the Muses' chosen home,
 Blest be the working of thy steadfast aim,
 And blest thy fancy through all time to come,
 Which whispers now, and now with words of flame
 Like sudden thunder makes the heart to pause ;
 Whence laurel to thy brow and myrtle came.

For in love-speaking, so to love's sweet laws
 Thy verse is subject, that no truer truth
 From passion's store the stricken spirit draws.
 But pent in Hell's huge coil, for pity and ruth

Thy voice is slow and broken and profound,
 To the harsh echoes singing sorrowful sooth ;
 And thy steps stumble in the weary bound ;—
 Of that dim maze where nothing is that shines
 Stalking the desolate circles round and round.
 Then through the prisoned air which sobs and pines
 With Purgatorial grief, up dost thou soar
 To Paradise, on the sun's dazzling lines.

There all the wonders thou dost reckon o'er
 Of that great Joy that never waxeth old,—
 A mighty hearing seldom heard before.
 To us by thee pleasures and woes are told,
 What path to fly from, in whose steps to tread,
 That from man's mind the veil may be unrolled.

But oh ! thine angry tones, awful and dread,
 What time God puts the thunder in thy mouth,
 Upon His foes the righteous wrath to shed !
 Then, then thy thoughts are of a mighty growth ;—
 Then does the terror of His holy curse
 Hurtle from East to West, from North to South ;—

Then heavy sorrow 'ginn'st thou to rehearse ;—
 Then Priests and Princes tremble and are pale,
 More than with ague shaken at thy verse.
 Though in thy praise all human praises fail,
 Even of the few who love thee and who bless,—
 The scoffing of the herd shall not prevail.

Thy words are weights, under whose mighty stress
 Tyrants and evil men shall shrink and quail ;
 True seeds of an undying perfectness.

TWO LYRICS

FROM NICCOLÒ TOMMASEO

I.—*THE YOUNG GIRL*

EVEN as a child that weeps,
Lulled by the love it keeps,
My grief lies back and sleeps.

Yes, it is Love bears up
My soul on his spread wings,
Which the days would else chafe out
With their infinite harassings.
To quicken it, he brings
The inward look and mild
That thy face wears, my child.

As in a gilded room
Shines 'mid the braveries
Some wild-flower, by the bloom
Of its delicate quietness
Recalling the forest-trees
In whose shadow it was,
And the water and the green grass :—

Even so, 'mid the stale loves
The city prisoneth,
Thou touchest me gratefully,
Like Nature's wholesome breath :
Thy heart nor hardeneth
In pride, nor putteth on
Obeisance not its own.

Not thine the skill to shut
The love up in thine heart,
Neither to seem more tender,
Less tender than thou art.
Thou dost not hold apart
In silence when thy joys
Most long to find a voice.

Let the proud river-course,
That shakes its mane and champs,
Run between marble shores
By the light of many lamps,
While all the ooze and the damps
Of the city's choked-up ways
Make it their draining-place.

Rather the little stream
For me ; which, hardly heard,
Unto the flower, its friend,
Whispers as with a word.
The timid journeying bird
Of the pure drink that flows
Takes but one drop, and goes.

II.—A FAREWELL

I SOOTHED and pitied thee : and for thy lips,—
 A smile, a word (sure guide
 To love that's ill to hide !)
 Was all I had thereof.

Even as an orphan boy, whom, sore distress'd,
 A gentle woman meets beside the road
 And takes him home with her,—so to thy breast
 Thou didst take home my image : pure abode !
 'Twas but a virgin's dream. This heart bestow'd
 Respect and piety
 And friendliness on thee :
 But it is poor in love.

No, I am not for thee. Thou art too new,
 I am too old, to the old beaten way.
 The griefs are not the same which grieve us two :
 Thy thought and mine lie far apart to-day.
 Less than I wish, more than I hope, alway
 Are heart and soul in thee.
 Thou art too much for me,
 Sister, and not enough.

A better and a fresher heart than mine
 Perchance may meet thee ere thy youth be told ;
 Or, cheated by the longing that is thine,
 Waiting for life perchance thou shalt wax old.
 Perchance the time may come when I may hold
 It had been best for me
 To have had thy ministry
 On the steep path and rough.

SONNET

FROM CECCO ANGIOLIERI

In absence from Becchina

I'm better skill'd to frolic on a bed
 Than any man that goes upon two feet ;
 And so, when I and certain moneys meet,
 You'll fancy with what joys I shall be fed.
 Meanwhile (alas !) I can but long instead
 To be within her arms held close and sweet
 To whom without reserve and past retreat
 My soul and body and heart are subjected.
 For often, when my mind is all distraught
 With this whereof I make my boast, I pass
 The day in deaths which never seem enough ;
 And all my blood within is boiling hot,
 Yet I've less strength than running water has ;
 And this shall last as long as I'm in love.

FROM THE ROMAN DE LA ROSE

TENDER as dew her cheeks' warm life ;
 She was as simple as a wife,
 She was as white as lilies are.
 Her face was sweet and smooth and fair :
 Slender and very straight she was,
 And on her cheeks no paint might pass.

Her fair hair was so long that it
 Shook, when she walked, about her feet :
 Eyes, nose, and mouth, were perfect art,
 Exceeding pain is at my heart
 When I remember me of her.

POEMS BY FRANCESCO AND GAETANO POLIDORI

Il Losario : Poema Eroico Romanesco, di Ser FRANCESCO POLIDORI. Messo in luce, coll'aggiunta di Tre Canti, da GAETANO POLIDORI, suo nipote. Firenze e Londra.
 [*Losario : a Poetic Romance*. By Ser FRANCESCO POLIDORI. Now first published, with the addition of Three Cantos, by his nephew, GAETANO POLIDORI. Florence and London.]

It is so rarely that the reviewer nowadays has to cope with anything even remotely resembling an epic, that when such a work does happen to fall in his way he is apt to consider the perusal of it as an achievement almost worthy to form the subject of a poem of equal pretensions. Nor is it in all moods that he would so much as attempt the task ; for indeed we fear it might almost be said of Homer himself that only when that great man is found nodding could he count safely upon the "used-up" energies of a modern critic as being in perfectly sympathetic relation with him.

The poem whose title and genealogy head our present article is not, however, a direct descendant from the great epic stock, but rather belonging to that illegitimate line which claims Ariosto for its ancestor—a bastard, for the matter of that, with a dash of the Falconbridge humour in him, and not at all disposed to yield the hereditary lion's skin to any that has not strength to keep it. Or perhaps, on some accounts, the author of *Losario* would have preferred to trace the pedigree of his work through Tasso's branch of the heroic family, which, if more legitimate, has yet always seemed to us to be less akin to the parent stock in vigour than is the misbegotten fire of Ariosto ; and, indeed, almost liable now and then to that irreverent imputation of being "got betwixt sleep and wake." *Au reste*, we can assure the reader that, whatever may have been the balance of our author's predilections, his poem of *Losario* is a perfect *cornucopia* of marvellous adventure ; where kings' sons are dethroned and reinstated ; where usurpers, in the hour of triumph, find themselves cloven to the chine ; where the unjustifiable lives of dragons are held on the most perilous tenure ; where the gods themselves are the "medium" of prophecy ; and where the valour of the hero is unsurpassed, except perhaps by that of his lady—the love here being not only platonic, but generally having Mars for a Cupid.

Before proceeding to give a translated extract from the poem, we need merely premise regarding its author, Ser Francesco Polidori (the *Ser* being a legal title), that he was born in the year 1720, at Pontedera,

in Tuscany; that he followed the profession of the law, in which, however, his natural goodness of heart appears to have interfered with his success; and that he died in 1773. *Losario*, which seems to have been his only considerable work, after remaining in the limbo of manuscript for about a century, now at length sees the light under the auspices of a nonagenarian descendant; for such, as may be gathered from the preface, is now the venerable age of its editor, of whom we shall have more to say anon.

The following extract is taken from a passage of the poem where Prince Losario and his friend Antasete are informed by a river-nymph of the means whereby they may succeed in destroying a dragon which troubles her dominion:—

Silent, she lifted softly through the wave
 All her divine white bosom; seeming there
 As when Aurora, freed from night's dull cave,
 Fills full of roses the sweet morning air;
 Then, with a hand more white than snows which pave
 The Alps, upon their brows that water clear
 She shook; and, to the immediate summons sent,
 The monster's presence stirr'd the element.

And the banks shudder'd, and the sky grew dark,
 As the dark river heaved with that obscene
 Infamous bulk: the while each knight, to mark
 His 'vantage, hover'd, stout in heart and mien,
 Around it. Watchful were their eyes, and stark
 Losario's onset; and yet weak, I ween,
 Against the constant spray of fire and smoke,
 Which from the dragon's lips and nostrils broke.

Blinded and baffled by the hideous rain,
 And stunn'd with gnashing fangs and scourged with claws,
 Still brave Losario toils, but spends in vain
 His strength against the dragon without pause;
 Till at the last, one mighty stroke amain
 Within the nether rack of those foul jaws
 He dealt. Then fume and flame together ceased
 At once; and on the palpitating beast

The champion fell with his strong naked hands;
 And right and left such iron blows struck he
 On that hard front, that far across the sands
 The deep woods utter'd echoes heavily;
 A noise like that when some broad roof withstands
 The hail-clouds under which the cattle flee.
 But when at length those open jaws emit
 A flickering tongue, the prince lays hold on it.

Then Antasete, who by the creature's flank
 Still watch'd, obedient to the nymph, did rouse
 His strength, and up the rugged loins that stank
 Clomb on its neck, and bit it in the brows.
 Straight as his teeth within the forehead sank,
 Those execrable limbs fell ponderous;
 And from the wound such spilh of gore was shed,
 That lips, and chin, and fingers, were all red.

(Canto 3, st. 28, *et seq.*)

There is movement in the above description, and the bloody work is done with an appropriately savage relish. Nor is this, perhaps, the best passage which we could have taken from the poem; but its episodic character recommended it to extract.

Having said thus much of *Losario* and its author, we shall add, before we conclude, some little regarding its editor, whose own poetical works (and he has written much) we have been looking over at the same time with this his last publication; which, moreover, as its title-page indicates, owes its concluding cantos to his hand.

We have said above that Mr. Polidori is now in his ninetieth year ; and we find, by the preface to his collected poems, that sixty of these years have been spent in England. Nor has his sojourn here been without results : having led apparently to an extensive acquaintance with our literature, and induced him probably to undertake his excellent translation of Milton's works, whose value has been acknowledged both here and in his own country. Among his other labours as a translator, the version of Lucan's *Pharsalia* deserves high praise, and has obtained it in many quarters. To him also the student of Milton is indebted for the modern republication of that very rare work the *Angeleida* of Valvasoni ; accompanied by a valuable dissertation regarding its claims to have suggested in any degree the structure of the *Paradise Lost*. We may add that Mr. Polidori was the father of the late Dr. Polidori, who wrote the *Vampyre*, erroneously attributed to Lord Byron ; and that he is the father-in-law of Professor Rossetti, celebrated among the patriotic poets of his country, and in the *selva oscura* of Dantesque criticism.

We gather from the preface to Mr. Polidori's original poems, that during four years of his youth he was secretary to that Byron of the classic school, or Racine of romanticism, "rejected by both,"—the great Alfieri ; a strange kind of prodigal-ascetic, suggesting fantastic combinations ; of whom one might say that he seemed bent on carrying on simultaneously the two phases of Timon's career, and "throwing in" Shakspeare *par étrenne*. In this preface are many most curious anecdotes, exhibiting the stoical pretensions and childish self-will, the republicanism and brutal arrogance, the euphuistic woman-worship and private unmanliness (for none of these terms are too harsh), which were among the contradictions that made up this unchivalrous troubadour. Some of these scraps from the *unacted* biography of one who was seldom behind the scenes, we would willingly extract for our readers ; but, indeed, they should rightly be read together. We, therefore, prefer translating a couple of specimens from the poems in Mr. Polidori's volume.

The following passage occurs in the second of two poems entitled "La Fantasia" and "Il Disinganno ;" which may be translated "Fantasy" and "Disenchantment," or perhaps more properly, "Illusion" and "Experience." The joint theme seems to us admirably chosen, and its execution highly successful.

WINTER

In this dead winter season now,
Whose rigid sky is like a corpse,
Awhile beneath some naked bough
Here let me stand, beholding how
The frost all earthly life absorbs.

Yet fair the sky with clouds o'erspread,
As in grey mantle garmented ;
While hastily or placidly
The snow's white flakes descend to clothe
The pleasant world and all its growth.
And passing fair it is to see
How hills and multitudinous woods,
And trees alone in solitudes,
Accept the white shroud silently ;
And I have watch'd and deem'd it fair,
While myrtle, laurel, juniper,
Slowly were hidden ; while each spring,
Each river, crept, an unknown thing,
Beneath its crystal covering.

Then shalt thou see, beside the wan
 Changed surface of his watery home,
 Stand lean and cold the famish'd swan,—
 One foot within his ruffled plumes
 Uppgather'd, while his eyes will roam
 Around, till from the wintry glooms
 Beneath the wing they hopelessly
 Take shelter, that they may not see.
 And though sad thoughts within her rise
 At the drear sight, yet it shall soothe
 Thy soul to look in any guise
 Upon the teaching face of truth.

Or shall no beauty fill the mind,
 No lesson—when the flocks stand fast,
 Their backs all set against the blast,
 Labouring immovable, combined,
 Till they with their weak feet have burst
 The frost-bound treasure of the stream,
 And now at length may quench their thirst?
 And O! how beautiful doth seem
 That evening journey when the herd
 Troop homeward by accustom'd ways,
 All night in paddock there to graze,
 And know the joy of rest deferr'd.
 Or if the crow, the sullen bird,
 Upon some leafless branch in view,
 Thrusts forth his neck, and flaps the bleak
 Dry wind, and grates his ravenous beak,
 That sight may feed thy musings too.

And grand it is, 'mid forest boughs,
 In darkness, awfully forlorn,
 At night to hear the wind carouse,
 Within whose breath the strong trees quake
 Or stand with naked limbs all torn;
 While such unwonted clamours wake
 Around, that over all the plain
 Fear walks abroad, and tremble then
 The flocks, the herds, the husbandmen.

But most sublime of all, most holy,
 The unfathomable melancholy
 When winds are silent in their cells;
 When underneath the moon's calm light,
 And in the unalter'd snow which veils
 All height and depth—to look thereon,
 It seems throughout the solemn night
 As if the earth and sky were one.

We doubt not that many of our readers will enjoy with us, in the above beautiful passage, both the close observation of nature, and the under-current of suggestive thought. In our second extract, which closes this notice, it seems to us that the beauty of Mr. Polidori's images is sufficient to disprove their modest application to his own poetic powers.

SONNET TO THE LAUREL

APPROACHING thee, thou growth of mystic spell,
 That wast of old a virgin fair and wise,
 I fix upon thee my devoted eyes
 And stand a little while immovable.
 Then if in the low breeze thy branches quail—
 "What, so afraid?" I say; "not I, poor tree,
 Apollo; though my heart hath cherish'd thee
 Because thou crown'st his children's foreheads well."
 Then half-incensed, abasing mine own brow—
 "These leaves," I muse, "how many crave—with these
 How few at length the flattering gods endow!
 I hoped—ah! shall I hope again? Nay, cease.
 Too much, alas! the world's rude clamours now
 Bewilder mine accorded cadences."

A DOCTOR'S ADVICE

Translated from an inscription in ill-spelt French verse scratched on the pane of a window at the New Inn, Winchelsea.

My doctor's issued his decree
That too much wine is killing me,
And furthermore his ban he hurls
Against my touching naked girls.

How then? must I no longer share
Good wine or beauties dark and fair?
Doctor, goodbye, my sail's unfurl'd,
I'm off to try the other world.

MY LADY

My lady, as God made you, may God guard you :
My lady, God uphold you, God exalt you ;
My lady, may God grant you all your wishes.

LILITH

FROM GÖTHE

HOLD thou thy heart against her shining hair,
If, by thy fate, she spread it once for thee ;
For, when she nets a young man in that snare,
So twines she him he never may be free.

THE BALLAD OF DEAD LADIES

FRANÇOIS VILLON, 1450

TELL me now in what hidden way is
Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
Neither of them the fairer woman?
Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,—
She whose beauty was more than human? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where's Héloïse, the learned nun,
For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
(From Love he won such dule and teen!)
And where, I pray you, is the Queen
Who willed that Buridan should steer
Sewed in a sack's mouth down the Seine? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,
With a voice like any mermaid,—
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,
And Ermengarde the lady of Maine,—
And that good Joan whom Englishmen
At Rouen doomed and burned her there,—
Mother of God, where are they then? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
 Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
 Save with thus much for an overword,—
 But where are the snows of yester-year?

TO DEATH, OF HIS LADY

FRANÇOIS VILLON

DEATH, of thee do I make my moan,
 Who hadst my lady away from me,
 Nor wilt assuage thine enmity
 Till with her life thou hast mine own:
 For since that hour my strength has flown.
 Lo! what wrong was her life to thee,
 Death?

Two we were, and the heart was one;
 Which now being dead, dead I must be,
 Or seem alive as lifelessly
 As in the choir the painted stone,
 Death!

JOHN OF TOURS

OLD FRENCH

JOHN OF TOURS is back with peace,
 But he comes home ill at ease.

"Good-morrow, mother." "Good-morrow, son;
 Your wife has borne you a little one."

"Go now, mother, go before,
 Make me a bed upon the floor;

"Very low your foot must fall,
 That my wife hear not at all."

As it neared the midnight toll,
 John of Tours gave up his soul.

"Tell me now, my mother my dear,
 What's the crying that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the children wake,
 Crying with their teeth that ache."

"Tell me though, my mother my dear,
 What's the knocking that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the carpenter
 Mending planks upon the stair."

"Tell me too, my mother my dear,
 What's the singing that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the priests in rows
Going round about our house."

"Tell me then, my mother my dear,
What's the dress that I should wear?"

"Daughter, any reds or blues,
But the black is most in use."

"Nay, but say, my mother my dear,
Why do you fall weeping here?"

"Oh! the truth must be said,—
It's that John of Tours is dead."

"Mother, let the sexton know
That the grave must be for two;

"Aye, and still have room to spare,
For you must shut the baby there."

MY FATHER'S CLOSE

OLD FRENCH

INSIDE my father's close,
(Fly away O my heart away!)
Sweet apple-blossom blows
So sweet.

Three kings' daughters fair,
(Fly away O my heart away!)
They lie below it there
So sweet.

"Ah!" says the eldest one,
(Fly away O my heart away!)
"I think the day's begun
So sweet."

"Ah!" says the second one,
(Fly away O my heart away!)
"Far off I hear the drum
So sweet."

"Ah!" says the youngest one,
(Fly away O my heart away!)
"It's my true love, my own,
So sweet."

"Oh! if he fight and win,"
(Fly away O my heart away!)
"I keep my love for him,
So sweet:
Oh! let him lose or win,
He hath it still complete."

BEAUTY

A COMBINATION FROM SAPPHO

I

LIKE the sweet apple which reddens upon the topmost bough,
 A-top on the top-most twig,—which the pluckers forgot somehow,—
 Forgot it not, nay, but got it not, for none could get it till now.

II

Like the wild hyacinth flower which on the hills is found,
 Which the passing feet of the shepherds for ever tear and wound,
 Until the purple blossom is trodden into the ground.

THE LEAF

LEOPARDI

“TORN from your parent bough,
 Poor leaf all withered now,
 Where go you?” “I cannot tell.
 Storm-stricken is the oak-tree
 Where I grew, whence I fell.
 Changeful continually,
 The zephyr and hurricane
 Since that day bid me flee
 From deepest woods to the lea,
 From highest hills to the plain.
 Where the wind carries me
 I go without fear or grief:
 I go whither each one goes,—
 Thither the leaf of the rose
 And thither the laurel-leaf.”

HIS MOTHER'S SERVICE TO OUR LADY

FRANÇOIS VILLON

LADY of Heaven and Earth, and therewithal
 Crowned Empress of the nether clefts of Hell,—
 I, thy poor Christian, on thy name do call,
 Commending me to thee, with thee to dwell,
 Albeit in nought I be commendable.
 But all mine undeserving may not mar
 Such mercies as thy sovereign mercies are;
 Without the which (as true words testify)
 No soul can reach thy Heaven so fair and far.
 Even in this faith I choose to live and die.

Unto thy Son say thou that I am His,
 And to me graceless make Him gracious.
 Sad Mary of Egypt lacked not of that bliss,
 Nor yet the sorrowful clerk Theophilus,
 Whose bitter sins were set aside even thus
 Though to the Fiend his bounden service was.
 Oh help me, lest in vain for me should pass
 (Sweet Virgin that shalt have no loss thereby !)
 The blessed Host and sacring of the Mass.
 Even in this faith I choose to live and die.

A pitiful poor woman, shrunk and old,
 I am, and nothing learn'd in letter-lore.
 Within my parish-cloister I behold
 A painted Heaven where harps and lutes adore,
 And eke an Hell whose damned folk seethe full sore :
 One bringeth fear, the other joy to me.
 That joy, great Goddess, make thou mine to be,—
 Thou of whom all must ask it even as I ;
 And that which faith desires, that let it see.
 For in this faith I choose to live and die.

O excellent Virgin Princess ! thou didst bear
 King Jesus, the most excellent comforter,
 Who even of this our weakness craved a share,
 And for our sake stooped to us from on high,
 Offering to death His young life sweet and fair.
 Such as He is, Our Lord, I Him declare,
 And in this faith I choose to live and die.

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI

DANTE

WHEN I made answer, I began : " Alas !
 How many sweet thoughts and how much desire
 Led these two onward to the dolorous pass ! "
 Then turned to them, as who would fain inquire,
 And said : " Francesca, these thine agonies
 Wring tears for pity and grief that they inspire :
 But tell me,—in the season of sweet sighs,
 When and what way did Love instruct you so
 That he in your vague longings made you wise ? "
 Then she to me : " There is no greater woe
 Than the remembrance brings of happy days
 In misery ; and this thy guide doth know.
 But if the first beginnings to retrace
 Of our sad love can yield thee solace here,
 So will I be as one that weeps and says.
 One day we read, for pastime and sweet cheer,
 Of Lancelot, how he found Love tyrannous :
 We were alone and without any fear.
 Our eyes were drawn together, reading thus,
 Full oft, and still our cheeks would pale and glow ;
 But one sole point it was that conquered us.
 For when we read of that great lover, how

He kissed the smile which he had longed to win,⁴²³
Then he whom nought can sever from me now
For ever, kissed my mouth, all quivering.
A Galahalt was the book, and he that writ :
Upon that day we read no more therein."
At the tale told, while one soul uttered it,
The other wept : a pang so pitiable
That I was seized, like death, in swooning-fit,
And even as a dead body falls, I fell.

LA PIA

DANTE

" AH when on earth thy voice again is heard,
And thou from the long road hast rested thee,"
After the second spirit said the third,
" Remember me who am La Pia. Me
Siena, me Maremma, made, unmade.
He knoweth this thing in his heart—even he
With whose fair jewel I was ringed and wed."

PROSE

HAND AND SOUL

Rivolsimi in quel lato
Là onde venia la voce,
E parvemi una luce
Che lucea quanto stella :
La mia mente era quella.

Bonaggiunta Urbiciani (1250).

BEFORE any knowledge of painting was brought to Florence, there were already painters in Lucca, and Pisa, and Arezzo, who feared God and loved the art. The workmen from Greece, whose trade it was to sell their own works in Italy and teach Italians to imitate them, had already found in rivals of the soil a skill that could forestall their lessons and cheapen their labours, more years than is supposed before the art came at all into Florence. The pre-eminence to which Cimabue was raised at once by his contemporaries, and which he still retains to a wide extent even in the modern mind, is to be accounted for, partly by the circumstances under which he arose, and partly by that extraordinary *purpose of fortune* born with the lives of some few, and through which it is not a little thing for any who went before, if they are even remembered as the shadows of the coming of such an one, and the voices which prepared his way in the wilderness. It is thus, almost exclusively, that the painters of whom I speak are now known. They have left little, and but little heed is taken of that which men hold to have been surpassed ; it is gone like time gone,—a track of dust and dead leaves that merely led to the fountain.

Nevertheless, of very late years and in very rare instances, some signs of a better understanding have become manifest. A case in point is that of the triptych and two cruciform pictures at Dresden, by Chiaro di Messer Bello dell' Erma, to which the eloquent pamphlet of Dr. Aemmster has at length succeeded in attracting the students. There is another still more solemn and beautiful work, now proved to be by the same hand, in the Pitti gallery at Florence. It is the one to which my narrative will relate.

This Chiaro dell' Erma was a young man of very honourable family in Arezzo ; where, conceiving art almost for himself, and loving it deeply, he endeavoured from early boyhood towards the imitation of any objects offered in nature. The extreme longing after a visible embodiment of his thoughts strengthened as his years increased, more even than his sinews or the blood of his life ; until he would feel faint in sunsets and at the sight of stately persons. When he had lived nineteen years, he heard of the famous Giunta Pisano ; and, feeling much of admiration, with perhaps a little of that envy which youth always feels until it has learned to measure success by time and opportunity, he determined that he would seek out Giunta, and, if possible, become his pupil.

Having arrived in Pisa, he clothed himself in humble apparel, being unwilling that any other thing than the desire he had for knowledge should be his plea with the great painter ; and then, leaving his baggage at a house of entertainment, he took his way along the street, asking whom he met for the lodging of Giunta. It soon chanced that one of that city, conceiving him to be a stranger and poor, took him into his house and refreshed him ; afterwards directing him on his way.

When he was brought to speech of Giunta, he said merely that he was a student, and that nothing in the world was so much at his heart as to become that which he had heard told of him with whom he was speaking. He was received with courtesy and consideration, and soon stood among the works of the famous artist. But the forms he saw there were lifeless and incomplete ; and a sudden exultation possessed him as he said within himself, " I am the master of this man." The blood came at first into his face, but the next moment he was quite pale and fell to trembling. He was able, however, to conceal his emotion ; speaking very little to Giunta, but when he took his leave, thanking him respectfully.

After this, Chiaro's first resolve was, that he would work out thoroughly some one of his thoughts, and let the world know him. But the lesson which he had now learned, of how small a greatness might win fame, and how little there was to strive against, served to make him torpid, and rendered his exertions less continual. Also Pisa was a larger and more luxurious city than Arezzo ; and when, in his walks, he saw the great gardens laid out for pleasure, and the beautiful women who passed to and fro, and heard the music that was in the groves of the city at evening, he was taken with wonder that he had never claimed his share of the inheritance of those years in which his youth was cast. And women loved Chiaro ; for, in despite of the burthen of study, he was well-favoured and very manly in his walking ; and, seeing his face in front, there was a glory upon it, as upon the face of one who feels a light round his hair.

So he put thought from him, and partook of his life. But, one night, being in a certain company of ladies, a gentleman that was there with him began to speak of the paintings of a youth named Bonaventura, which he had seen in Lucca ; adding that Giunta Pisano might now look for a rival. When Chiaro heard this, the lamps shook before him and the music beat in his ears. He rose up, alleging a sudden sickness, and went out of that house with his teeth set. And, being again within his room, he wrote up over the door the name of Bonaventura, that it might stop him when he would go out.

He now took to work diligently, not returning to Arezzo, but remaining in Pisa, that no day more might be lost ; only living entirely to himself. Sometimes, after nightfall, he would walk abroad in the most solitary places he could find ; hardly feeling the ground under him, because of the thoughts of the day which held him in fever.

The lodging Chiaro had chosen was in a house that looked upon gardens fast by the Church of San Petronio. It was here, and at this time, that he painted the Dresden pictures ; as also, in all likelihood, the one—inferior in merit, but certainly his—which is now at Munich. For the most part he was calm and regular in his manner of study ; though often he would remain at work through the whole of a day, not resting once so long as the light lasted ; flushed, and with the hair from his face. Or, at times, when he could not paint, he would sit for hours in thought of all the greatness the world had known from of old ; until he was weak with yearning, like one who gazes upon a path of stars.

He continued in this patient endeavour for about three years, at the end of which his name was spoken throughout all Tuscany. As his fame waxed, he began to be employed, besides easel-pictures, upon wall-paintings ; but I believe that no traces remain to us of any of

these latter. He is said to have painted in the Duomo; and D'Agincourt mentions having seen some portions of a picture by him which originally had its place above the high altar in the Church of the Certosa; but which, at the time he saw it, being very dilapidated, had been hewn out of the wall, and was preserved in the stores of the convent. Before the period of Dr. Aemmster's researches, however, it had been entirely destroyed.

Chiario was now famous. It was for the race of fame that he had girded up his loins; and he had not paused until fame was reached; yet now, in taking breath, he found that the weight was still at his heart. The years of his labour had fallen from him, and his life was still in its first painful desire.

With all that Chiario had done during these three years, and even before with the studies of his early youth, there had always been a feeling of worship and service. It was the peace-offering that he made to God and to his own soul for the eager selfishness of his aim. There was earth, indeed, upon the hem of his raiment; but *this* was of the heaven, heavenly. He had seasons when he could endure to think of no other feature of his hope than this. Sometimes it had even seemed to him to behold that day when his mistress—his mystical lady (now hardly in her ninth year, but whose smile at meeting had already lighted on his soul,)—even she, his own gracious Italian Art—should pass, through the sun that never sets, into the shadow of the tree of life, and be seen of God and found good: and then it had seemed to him that he, with many who, since his coming, had joined the band of whom he was one (for, in his dream, the body he had worn on earth had been dead an hundred years), were permitted to gather round the blessed maiden, and to worship with her through all ages and ages of ages, saying, Holy, holy, holy. This thing he had seen with the eyes of his spirit; and in this thing had trusted, believing that it would surely come to pass.

But now, (being at length led to inquire closely into himself,) even as, in the pursuit of fame, the unrest abiding after attainment had proved to him that he had misinterpreted the craving of his own spirit—so also, now that he would willingly have fallen back on devotion, he became aware that much of that reverence which he had mistaken for faith had been no more than the worship of beauty. Therefore, after certain days passed in perplexity, Chiario said within himself, "My life and my will are yet before me: I will take another aim to my life."

From that moment Chiario set a watch on his soul, and put his hand to no other works but only to such as had for their end the presentment of some moral greatness that should influence the beholder: and to this end, he multiplied abstractions, and forgot the beauty and passion of the world. So the people ceased to throng about his pictures as heretofore; and, when they were carried through town and town to their destination, they were no longer delayed by the crowds eager to gaze and admire; and no prayers or offerings were brought to them on their path, as to his Madonnas, and his Saints, and his Holy Children, wrought for the sake of the life he saw in the faces that he loved. Only the critical audience remained to him; and these, in default of more worthy matter, would have turned their scrutiny on a puppet or a mantle. Meanwhile, he had no more of fever upon him; but was calm and pale each day in all that he did and in his goings in and out. The works he produced at this time have perished—in all likelihood, not unjustly. It is said (and we may easily believe it), that, though more laboured than his former pictures, they were cold and unemphatic; bearing marked out upon them the measure of that boundary to which they were made to conform.

And the weight was still close at Chiario's heart: but he held in his breath, never resting (for he was afraid), and would not know it,

Now it happened, within these days, that there fell a great feast in Pisa, for holy matters : and each man left his occupation ; and all the guilds and companies of the city were got together for games and rejoicings. And there were scarcely any that stayed in the houses, except ladies who lay or sat along their balconies between open windows which let the breeze beat through the rooms and over the spread tables from end to end. And the golden cloths that their arms lay upon drew all eyes upward to see their beauty ; and the day was long ; and every hour of the day was bright with the sun.

So Chiaro's model, when he awoke that morning on the hot pavement of the Piazza Nunziata, and saw the hurry of people that passed him, got up and went along with them ; and Chiaro waited for him in vain.

For the whole of that morning, the music was in Chiaro's room from the Church close at hand ; and he could hear the sounds that the crowd made in the streets ; hushed only at long intervals while the processions for the feast-day chanted in going under his windows. Also, more than once, there was a high clamour from the meeting of factious persons : for the ladies of both leagues were looking down ; and he who encountered his enemy could not choose but draw upon him. Chiaro waited a long time idle ; and then knew that his model was gone elsewhere. When at his work, he was blind and deaf to all else ; but he feared sloth : for then his stealthy thoughts would begin to beat round and round him, seeking a point for attack. He now rose, therefore, and went to the window. It was within a short space of noon ; and underneath him a throng of people was coming out through the porch of San Petronio.

The two greatest houses of the feud in Pisa had filled the church for that mass. The first to leave had been the Gherghiotti ; who, stopping on the threshold, had fallen back in ranks along each side of the archway : so that now, in passing outward, the Marotoli had to walk between two files of men whom they hated, and whose fathers had hated theirs. All the chiefs were there and their whole adherence ; and each knew the name of each. Every man of the Marotoli, as he came forth and saw his foes, laid back his hood and gazed about him, to show the badge upon the close cap that held his hair. And of the Gherghiotti there were some who tightened their girdles ; and some shrilled and threw up their wrists scornfully, as who flies a falcon ; for that was the crest of their house.

On the walls within the entry were a number of tall narrow pictures, presenting a moral allegory of Peace, which Chiaro had painted that year for the Church. The Gherghiotti stood with their backs to these frescoes ; and among them Golzo Ninuccio, the youngest noble of the faction, called by the people Golaghiotta, for his debased life. This youth had remained for some while talking listlessly to his fellows, though with his sleepy sunken eyes fixed on them who passed : but now, seeing that no man jostled another, he drew the long silver shoe off his foot and struck the dust out of it on the cloak of him who was going by, asking him how far the tides rose at Viderza. And he said so because it was three months since, at that place, the Gherghiotti had beaten the Marotoli to the sands, and held them there while the sea came in ; whereby many had been drowned. And, when he had spoken, at once the whole archway was dazzling with the light of confused swords ; and they who had left turned back ; and they who were still behind made haste to come forth ; and there was so much blood cast up the walls on a sudden, that it ran in long streams down Chiaro's paintings.

Chiaro turned himself from the window ; for the light felt dry between his lids, and he could not look. He sat down, and heard the noise of contention driven out of the church-porch and a great way through the streets ; and soon there was a deep murmur that heaved

and waxed from the other side of the city, where those of both parties were gathering to join in the tumult.

Chiaro sat with his face in his open hands. Once again he had wished to set his foot on a place that looked green and fertile ; and once again it seemed to him that the thin rank mask was about to spread away, and that this time the chill of the water must leave leprosy in his flesh. The light still swam in his head, and bewildered him at first ; but when he knew his thoughts, they were these :—

“Fame failed me : faith failed me : and now this also,—the hope that I nourished in this my generation of men,—shall pass from me, and leave my feet and my hands groping. Yet because of this are my feet become slow and my hands thin. I am as one who, through the whole night, holding his way diligently, hath smitten the steel unto the flint, to lead some whom he knew darkling ; who hath kept his eyes always on the sparks that himself made, lest they should fail ; and who, towards dawn, turning to bid them that he had guided God speed, sees the wet grass untrodden except of his own feet. I am as the last hour of the day, whose chimes are a perfect number ; whom the next followeth not, nor light ensueth from him ; but in the same darkness is the old order begun afresh. Men say, ‘This is not God nor man ; he is not as we are, neither above us : let him sit beneath us, for we are many.’ Where I write Peace, in that spot is the drawing of swords, and there men’s footprints are red. When I would sow, another harvest is ripe. Nay, it is much worse with me than thus much. Am I not as a cloth drawn before the light, that the looker may not be blinded ? but which sheweth thereby the grain of its own coarseness, so that the light seems defiled, and men say, ‘We will not walk by it.’ Wherefore through me they shall be doubly accursed, seeing that through me they reject the light. May one be a devil and not know it ? ”

As Chiaro was in these thoughts, the fever encroached slowly on his veins, till he could sit no longer and would have risen ; but suddenly he found awe within him, and held his head bowed, without stirring. The warmth of the air was not shaken ; but there seemed a pulse in the light, and a living freshness, like rain. The silence was a painful music, that made the blood ache in his temples ; and he lifted his face and his deep eyes.

A woman was present in his room, clad to the hands and feet with a green and grey raiment, fashioned to that time. It seemed that the first thoughts he had ever known were given him as at first from her eyes, and he knew her hair to be the golden veil through which he beheld his dreams. Though her hands were joined, her face was not lifted, but set forward ; and though the gaze was austere, yet her mouth was supreme in gentleness. And as he looked, Chiaro’s spirit appeared abashed of its own intimate presence, and his lips shook with the thrill of tears ; it seemed such a bitter while till the spirit might be indeed alone.

She did not move closer towards him, but he felt her to be as much with him as his breath. He was like one who, scaling a great steepness, hears his own voice echoed in some place much higher than he can see, and the name of which is not known to him. As the woman stood, her speech was with Chiaro : not, as it were, from her mouth or in his ears ; but distinctly between them.

“I am an image, Chiaro, of thine own soul within thee. See me, and know me as I am. Thou sayest that fame has failed thee, and faith failed thee ; but because at least thou hast not laid thy life unto riches, therefore, though thus late, I am suffered to come into thy knowledge. Fame sufficed not, for that thou didst seek fame : seek thine own conscience (not thy mind’s conscience, but thine heart’s), and all shall approve and suffice. For Fame, in noble soils, is a fruit of the Spring : but not therefore should it be said : ‘Lo !

my garden that I planted is barren : the crocus is here, but the lily is dead in the dry ground, and shall not lift the earth that covers it : therefore I will fling my garden together, and give it unto the builders.' Take heed rather that thou trouble not the wise secret earth ; for in the mould that thou throwest up shall the first tender growth lie to waste ; which else had been made strong in its season. Yea, and even if the year fall past in all its months, and the soil be indeed, to thee, peevish and incapable, and though thou indeed gather all thy harvest, and it suffice for others, and thou remain vexed with emptiness ; and others drink of thy streams, and the drouth rasp thy throat ;—let it be enough that these have found the feast good, and thanked the giver : remembering that, when the winter is striven through, there is another year, whose wind is meek, and whose sun fulfilte all."

While he heard, Chiaro went slowly on his knees. It was not to her that spoke, for the speech seemed within him and his own. The air brooded in sunshine, and though the turmoil was great outside, the air within was at peace. But when he looked in her eyes, he wept. And she came to him, and cast her hair over him, and took her hands about his forehead, and spoke again :—

"Thou hast said," she continued, gently, "that faith failed thee. This cannot be. Either thou hadst it not, or thou hast it. But who bade thee strike the point betwixt love and faith ? Wouldst thou sift the warm breeze from the sun that quickens it ? Who bade thee turn upon God and say : 'Behold, my offering is of earth, and not worthy : Thy fire comes not upon it ; therefore, though I slay not my brother whom Thou acceptest, I will depart before Thou smite me.' Why shouldst thou rise up and tell God He is not content ? Had He, of His warrant, certified so to thee ? Be not nice to seek out division ; but possess thy love in sufficiency : assuredly this is faith, for the heart must believe first. What He hath set in thine heart to do, that do thou ; and even though thou do it without thought of Him, it shall be well done ; it is this sacrifice that He asketh of thee, and His flame is upon it for a sign. Think not of Him ; but of His love and thy love. For God is no morbid exactor : He hath no hand to bow beneath, nor a foot, that thou shouldst kiss it."

And Chiaro held silence, and wept into her hair which covered his face ; and the salt tears that he shed ran through her hair upon his lips ; and he tasted the bitterness of shame.

Then the fair woman, that was his soul, spoke again to him, saying :

"And for this thy last purpose, and for those unprofitable truths of thy teaching,—thine heart hath already put them away, and it needs not that I lay my bidding upon thee. How is it that thou, a man, wouldst say coldly to the mind what God hath said to the heart warmly ? Thy will was honest and wholesome ; but look well lest this also be folly,—to say, 'I, in doing this, do strengthen God among men.' When at any time hath He cried unto thee, saying, 'My son, lend Me thy shoulder, for I fall' ? Deemest thou that the men who enter God's temple in malice, to the provoking of blood, and neither for His love nor for His wrath will abate their purpose,—shall afterwards stand, with thee in the porch midway between Him and themselves, to give ear unto thy thin voice, which merely the fall of their visors can drown, and to see thy hands, stretched feebly, tremble among their swords ? Give thou to God no more than He asketh of thee ; but to man also, that which is man's. In all that thou doest, work from thine own heart, simply ; for his heart is as thine, when thine is wise and humble ; and he shall have understanding of thee. One drop of rain is as another, and the sun's prism in all : and shalt thou not be as he, whose lives are the breath of One ? Only by making thyself his equal can he learn to hold communion with thee, and at last own thee above him. Not till thou lean over the water shalt thou see

thine image therein : stand erect, and it shall slope from thy feet and be lost. Know that there is but this means whereby thou mayst serve God with man :—Set thine hand and thy soul to serve man with God."

And when she that spoke had said these words within Chiaro's spirit, she left his side quietly, and stood up as he had first seen her : with her fingers laid together, and her eyes steadfast, and with the breadth of her long dress covering her feet on the floor. And, speaking again, she said :—

"Chiaro, servant of God, take now thine Art unto thee, and paint me thus, as I am, to know me : weak, as I am, and in the weeds of this time ; only with eyes which seek out labour, and with a faith, not learned, yet jealous of prayer. Do this ; so shall thy soul stand before thee always, and perplex thee no more."

And Chiaro did as she bade him. While he worked, his face grew solemn with knowledge : and before the shadows had turned, his work was done. Having finished, he lay back where he sat, and was asleep immediately : for the growth of that strong sunset was heavy about him, and he felt weak and haggard ; like one just come out of a dusk, hollow country, bewildered with echoes, where he had lost himself, and who has not slept for many days and nights. And when she saw him lie back, the beautiful woman came to him, and sat at his head, gazing, and quieted his sleep with her voice.

The tumult of the factions had endured all that day through all Pisa, though Chiaro had not heard it : and the last service of that feast was a mass sung at midnight from the windows of all the churches for the many dead who lay about the city, and who had to be buried before morning, because of the extreme heat.

In the spring of 1847, I was at Florence. Such as were there at the same time with myself—those, at least, to whom Art is something,—will certainly recollect how many rooms of the Pitti Gallery were closed through that season, in order that some of the pictures they contained might be examined and repaired without the necessity of removal. The hall, the staircases, and the vast central suite of apartments, were the only accessible portions ; and in these such paintings as they could admit from the sealed *penetralia* were profanely huddled together, without respect of dates, schools, or persons.

I fear that, through this interdict, I may have missed seeing many of the best pictures. I do not mean *only* the most talked of : for these, as they were restored, generally found their way somehow into the open rooms, owing to the clamours raised by the students ; and I remember how old Ercoli's, the curator's, spectacles used to be mirrored in the reclaimed surface, as he leaned mysteriously over these works with some of the visitors, to scrutinize and elucidate.

One picture that I saw that spring, I shall not easily forget. It was among those, I believe, brought from the other rooms, and had been hung, obviously out of all chronology, immediately beneath that head by Raphael so long known as the *Berrettino*, and now said to be the portrait of Cecco Ciulli.

The picture I speak of is a small one, and represents merely the figure of a woman, clad to the hands and feet with a green and grey raiment, chaste and early in its fashion, but exceedingly simple. She is standing : her hands are held together lightly, and her eyes set earnestly open.

The face and hands in this picture, though wrought with great delicacy, have the appearance of being painted at once, in a single sitting : the drapery is unfinished. As soon as I saw the figure, it drew an awe upon me, like water in shadow. I shall not attempt to describe it more than I have already done ; for the most absorbing wonder of it was its literality. You knew that figure, when painted,

had been seen ; yet it was not a thing to be seen of men. This language will appear ridiculous to such as have never looked on the work ; and it may be even to some among those who have. On examining it closely, I perceived in one corner of the canvas the words *Manus Animam pinxit*, and the date 1239.

I turned to my Catalogue, but that was useless, for the pictures were all displaced. I then stepped up to the Cavaliere Ercoli, who was in the room at the moment, and asked him regarding the subject and authorship of the painting. He treated the matter, I thought, somewhat slightly, and said that he could show me the reference in the Catalogue, which he had compiled. This, when found, was not of much value, as it merely said, "Schizzo d'autore incerto," adding the inscription.* I could willingly have prolonged my inquiry, in the hope that it might somehow lead to some result ; but I had disturbed the curator from certain yards of Guido, and he was not communicative. I went back, therefore, and stood before the picture till it grew dusk.

The next day I was there again ; but this time a circle of students was round the spot, all copying the *Bervettino*. I contrived, however, to find a place whence I could see my picture, and where I seemed to be in nobody's way. For some minutes I remained undisturbed ; and then I heard, in an English voice : " Might I beg of you, sir, to stand a little more to this side, as you interrupt my view ? "

I felt vexed, for, standing where he asked me, a glare struck on the picture from the windows, and I could not see it. However, the request was reasonably made, and from a countryman ; so I complied, and turning away, stood by his easel. I knew it was not worth while ; yet I referred in some way to the work underneath the one he was copying. He did not laugh, but he smiled as we do in England. " *Very odd, is it not ?* " said he.

The other students near us were all continental ; and seeing an Englishman select an Englishman to speak with, conceived, I suppose, that he could understand no language but his own. They had evidently been noticing the interest which the little picture appeared to excite in me.

One of them, an Italian, said something to another who stood next to him. He spoke with a Genoese accent, and I lost the sense in the villanous dialect. " *Che so ?* " replied the other, lifting his eyebrows towards the figure ; " *roba mistica : 'st' Inglesi son matti sul misticismo : somiglia alle nebbie di là. Li fa pensare alla patria,*

‘ e intenerisce il core
Lo di ch' han detto ai dolci amici adio. ’ ”

" *La notte, vuoi dire,* " said a third.

There was a general laugh. My compatriot was evidently a novice in the language, and did not take in what was said. I remained silent, being amused.

" *Et toi donc ?* " said he who had quoted Dante, turning to a student, whose birthplace was unmistakable, even had he been addressed in any other language : " *que dis-tu de ce genre-là ?* "

" *Moi ?* " returned the Frenchman, standing back from his easel, and looking at me and at the figure, quite politely, though with an evident reservation : " *Je dis, mon cher, que c'est une spécialité dont je me fiche pas mal. Je tiens que quand on ne comprend pas une chose, c'est qu'elle ne signifie rien.* "

My reader thinks possibly that the French student was right.

* I should here say, that in the latest catalogues (owing, as in cases before mentioned, to the zeal and enthusiasm of Dr. Aemmster), this, and several other pictures, have been more competently entered. The work in question is now placed in the *Sala Sessagona*, a room I did not see—under the number 161. It is described as " *Figura mistica di Chiaro dell' Erma,* " and there is a brief notice of the author appended.

SAINT AGNES OF INTERCESSION

"In all my life," said my uncle in his customary voice, made up of goodness and trusting simplicity, and a spice of piety withal, which, an't pleased your worship, made it sound the sweeter,—“In all my life,” quoth my uncle Toby, “I have never heard a stranger story than one which was told me by a sergeant in Maclure's regiment, and which, with your permission, Doctor, I will relate.”

“No stranger, brother Toby,” said my father testily, “than a certain tale to be found in Slawkenbergius (being the eighth of his third Decad), and called by him the History of an Icelandish Nose.”

“Nor than the golden legend of Saint Anschankus of Lithuania,” added Dr. Slop, “who, being troubled digestively while delivering his discourse ‘de sanctis sanctorum,’ was tempted by the Devil in *imagine, vasis in contumeliam*,—which is to say,—in the form of a vessel unto dishonour.”

Now Excentrio, as one mocking, sayeth, etc., etc.—TRISTRAM SHANDY.

AMONG my earliest recollections, none is stronger than that of my father standing before the fire when he came home in the London winter evenings, and singing to us in his sweet, generous tones: sometimes ancient English ditties,—such songs as one might translate from the birds, and the brooks might set to music; sometimes those with which foreign travel had familiarized his youth,—among them the great tunes which have rung the world's changes since '89. I used to sit on the hearth-rug, listening to him, and look between his knees into the fire till it burned my face, while the sights swarming up in it seemed changed and changed with the music: till the music and the fire and my heart burned together, and I would take paper and pencil, and try in some childish way to fix the shapes that rose within me. For my hope, even then, was to be a painter.

The first book I remember to have read, of my own accord, was an old-fashioned work on Art, which my mother had,—Hamilton's “English Conoscente.” It was a kind of continental tour,—sufficiently Della-Cruscan, from what I can recall of it,—and contained notices of pictures which the author had seen abroad, with engravings after some of them. These were in the English fashion of that day, executed in stipple and printed with red ink; tasteless enough, no doubt, but I yearned towards them and would toil over them for days. One especially possessed for me a strong and indefinable charm: it was a Saint Agnes in glory, by Bucciolo d'Orli Angiolieri. This plate I could copy from the first with much more success than I could any of the others; indeed, it was mainly my love of the figure, and a desire to obtain some knowledge regarding it, which impelled me, by one magnanimous effort upon the “Conoscente,” to master in a few days more of the difficult art of reading than my mother's laborious inculcations had accomplished till then. However, what I managed to spell and puzzle out related chiefly to the executive qualities of the picture, which could be little understood by a mere child; of the artist himself, or the meaning of his work, the author of the book appeared to know scarcely anything.

As I became older, my boyish impulse towards art grew into a vital passion; till at last my father took me from school and permitted me my own bent of study. There is no need that I should dwell much upon the next few years of my life. The beginnings of Art, entered on at all seriously, present an alternation of extremes:—on the one hand, the most bewildering phases of mental endeavour, on the other, a toil rigidly exact and dealing often with trifles. What was then the precise shape of the cloud within my tabernacle, I could scarcely say now; or whether through so thick a veil I could be sure of its presence there at all. And as to which statue at the Museum I drew most or learned least from,—or which Professor at the Academy “set” the model in the worst taste,—these are things which no one need care to know. I may say, briefly, that I was wayward enough

in the pursuit, if not in the purpose ; that I cared even too little for what could be taught me by others ; and that my original designs greatly outnumbered my school-drawings.

In most cases where study (such study, at least, as involves any practical elements) has benumbed that subtle transition which brings youth out of boyhood, there comes a point, after some time, when the mind loses its suppleness and is riveted merely by the continuance of the mechanical effort. It is then that the constrained senses gradually assume their utmost tension, and any urgent impression from without will suffice to scatter the charm. The student looks up : the film of their own fixedness drops at once from before his eyes, and for the first time he sees his life in the face.

In my nineteenth year, I might say that, between one path of Art and another, I worked hard. One afternoon I was returning, after an unprofitable morning, from a class which I attended. The day was one of those oppressive lulls in autumn, when application, unless under sustained excitement, is all but impossible,—when the perceptions seem curdled and the brain full of sand. On ascending the stairs to my room, I heard voices there, and when I entered, found my sister Catharine, with another young lady, busily turning over my sketches and papers, as if in search of something. Catharine laughed, and introduced her companion as Miss Mary Arden. There might have been a little malice in the laugh, for I remembered to have heard the lady's name before, and to have then made in fun some teasing inquiries about her, as one will of one's sisters' friends. I bowed for the introduction, and stood rebuked. She had her back to the window, and I could not well see her features at the moment ; but I made sure she was very beautiful, from her tranquil body and the way that she held her hands. Catharine told me they had been looking together for a book of hers which I had had by me for some time, and which she had promised to Miss Arden. I joined in the search, the book was found, and soon after they left my room. I had come in utterly spiritless ; but now I fell to and worked well for several hours. In the evening, Miss Arden remained with our family circle till rather late : till she left I did not return to my room, nor, when there, was my work resumed that night. I had thought her more beautiful than at first.

After that, every time I saw her, her beauty seemed to grow on my sight by gazing, as the stars do in water. It was some time before I ceased to think of her beauty alone ; and even then it was still of her that I thought. For about a year my studies somewhat lost their hold upon me, and when that year was upon its close, she and I were promised in marriage.

Miss Arden's station in life, though not lofty, was one of more ease than my own, but the earnestness of her attachment to me had deterred her parents from placing any obstacles in the way of our union. All the more, therefore, did I now long to obtain at once such a position as should secure me from reproaching myself with any sacrifice made by her for my sake : and I now set to work with all the energy of which I was capable, upon a picture of some labour, involving various aspects of study. The subject was a modern one, and indeed it has often seemed to me that all work, to be truly worthy, should be wrought out of the age itself, as well as out of the soul of its producer, which must needs be a soul of the age. At this picture I laboured constantly and unweariedly, my days and my nights ; and Mary sat to me for the principal female figure. The exhibition to which I sent it opened a few weeks before the completion of my twenty-first year.

Naturally enough, I was there on the opening day. My picture, I knew, had been accepted, but I was ignorant of a matter perhaps still more important,—its situation on the walls. On that now depended its success ; on its success the fulfilment of my most cherished hopes

might almost be said to depend. That is not the least curious feature of life as evolved in society—which, where the average strength and the average mind are equal, as in this world, becomes to each life another name for destiny,—when a man, having endured labour, gives its fruits into the hands of other men, that they may do their work between him and mankind: confiding it to them, unknown, without seeking knowledge of them; to them, who have probably done in likewise before him, without appeal to the sympathy of kindred experience: submitting to them his naked soul, himself, blind and unseen: and with no thought of retaliation, when, it may be, by their judgment, more than one year, from his dubious threescore and ten, drops alongside, unprofitable, leaving its baffled labour for its successors to recommence. There is perhaps no proof more complete how sluggish and little arrogant, in aggregate life, is the sense of individuality.

I dare say something like this may have been passing in my mind as I entered the lobby of the exhibition, though the principle, with me as with others, was subservient to its application; my thoughts, in fact, starting from and tending towards myself and my own picture. The kind of uncertainty in which I then was is rather a nervous affair; and when, as I shouldered my way through the press, I heard my name spoken close behind me, I believe that I could have wished the speaker further off without being particular as to distance. I could not well, however, do otherwise than look round, and on doing so, recognised in him who had addressed me a gentleman to whom I had been introduced overnight at the house of a friend, and to whose remarks on the Corn question and the National Debt I had listened with a wish for deliverance somewhat akin to that which I now felt; the more so, perhaps, that my distaste was coupled with surprise; his name having been for some time familiar to me as that of a writer of poetry.

As soon as we were rid of the crush, we spoke and shook hands; and I said, to conceal my chagrin, some platitudes as to Poetry being present to support her sister Art in the hour of trial.

"Oh just so, thank you," said he; "have you anything here?"

While he spoke, it suddenly struck me that my friend, the night before, had informed me this gentleman was a critic as well as a poet. And indeed, for the hippopotamus-fronted man, with his splay limbs and wading gait, it seemed the more congenial vocation of the two. In a moment, the instinctive antagonism wedged itself between the artist and the reviewer, and I avoided his question.

He had taken my arm, and we were now in the gallery together. My companion's scrutiny was limited almost entirely to the "line," but my own glance wandered furtively among the suburbs and outskirts of the ceiling, as a misgiving possessed me that I might have a personal interest in those unenviable "high places" of art. Works, which at another time would have absorbed my whole attention, could now obtain from me but a restless and hurried examination: still I dared not institute an open search for my own, lest thereby I should reveal to my companion its presence in some dismal condemned corner which might otherwise escape his notice. Had I procured my catalogue, I might at least have known in which room to look; but I had omitted to do so, thinking thereby to know my fate the sooner, and never anticipating so vexatious an obstacle to my search. Meanwhile I must answer his questions, listen to his criticism, observe and discuss. After nearly an hour of this work, we were not through the first room. My thoughts were already bewildered, and my face burning with excitement.

By the time we reached the second room, the crowd was more dense than ever, and the heat more and more oppressive. A glance round the walls could reveal but little of the consecrated "line," before all

parts of which the backs were clustered more or less thickly ; except, perhaps, where at intervals hung the work of some venerable member, whose glory was departed from him. The seats in the middle of the room were, for the most part, empty as yet : here and there only an unenthusiastic lady had been left by her party, and sat in stately unruffled toilet, her eye ranging apathetically over the upper portion of the walls, where the gilt frames were packed together in desolate parade. Over these my gaze also passed uneasily, but without encountering the object of its solicitude.

In this room my friend the critic came upon a picture, conspicuously hung, which interested him prodigiously, and on which he seemed determined to have my opinion. It was one of those tender and tearful works, those "labours of love," since familiar to all print-shop *flâneurs*,—in which the wax doll is made to occupy a position in Art which it can never have contemplated in the days of its humble origin. The silks heaved and swayed in front of this picture the whole day long.

All that we could do was to stand behind, and catch a glimpse of it now and then, through the whispering bonnets, whose "curtains" brushed our faces continually. I hardly knew what to say, but my companion was lavish of his admiration, and began to give symptoms of the gushing of the poet-soul. It appeared that he had already seen the picture in the studio, and being but little satisfied with my monosyllables, was at great pains to convince me. While he chattered, I trembled with rage and impatience.

"You must be tired," said he at last ; "so am I ; let us rest a little." He led the way to a seat. I was his slave, bound hand and foot : I followed him.

The crisis now proceeded rapidly. When seated, he took from his pocket some papers, one of which he handed to me. Who does not know the dainty action of a poet fingering MS. ? The knowledge forms a portion of those wondrous instincts implanted in us for self-preservation. I was past resistance, however, and took the paper submissively.

"They are some verses," he said, "suggested by the picture you have just seen. I mean to print them in our next number, as being the only species of criticism adequate to such a work."

I read the poem twice over, for after the first reading I found I had not attended to a word of it, and was ashamed to give it him back. The repetition was not, however, much more successful, as regarded comprehension,—a fact which I have since believed (having seen it again) may have been dependent upon other causes besides my distracted thoughts. The poem, now included among the works of its author, runs as follows :—

O thou who art not as I am,
Yet knowest all that I must be,—
O thou who livest certainly
Full of deep meekness like a lamb
Close laid for warmth under its dam,
On pastures bare towards the sea :—

Look on me, for my soul is bleak,
Nor owns its labour in the years,
Because of the deep pain of tears :
It hath not found and will not seek,
Lest that indeed remain to speak
Which, passing, it believes it hears.

Like ranks in calm unipotence
Swayed past, compact and regular,
Time's purposes and portents are :
Yet the soul sleeps, while in the sense
The graven brows of Consequence
Lie sunk, as in blind wells the star.

O gaze along the wind-strewn path
 That curves distinct upon the road
 To the dim purple-hushed abode.
 Lo! autumn-tide and aftermath!
 Remember that the year has wrath
 If the ungarnered wheat corrode.

It is not that the fears are sore
 Or that the evil pride repels:
 But there where the heart's knowledge dwells
 The heart is gnawed within the core,
 Nor loves the perfume from that shore
 Faint with bloom-pulvered asphodels.

Having atoned for non-attention by a second perusal, whose only result was non-comprehension, I thought I had done my duty towards this performance, which I accordingly folded up and returned to its author. He asked, in so many words, my opinion of it.

"I think," replied I coolly, "that when a poet strikes out for himself a new path in style, he should first be quite convinced that it possesses sufficient advantages to counterbalance the contempt which the swarm of his imitators will bring upon poetry."

My ambiguity was successful. I could see him take the compliment to himself, and inhale it like a scent, while a slow broad smile covered his face. It was much as if, at some meeting, on a speech being made complimentary to the chairman, one of the waiters should elbow that personage aside, plant his knuckles on the table, and proceed to return thanks.

And indeed, I believe my gentleman was about to do so in due form, but my thoughts, which had been unable to resist some enjoyment of his conceit, now suddenly reverted to their one dominant theme; and rising at once, in an indignant spleen at being thus harassed and beset, I declared that I must leave him, and hurry through the rest of the gallery by myself, for that I had an impending appointment. He rose also. As we were shaking hands, a part of the "line" opposite to where we stood was left bare by a lapse in the crowd. "There seems to be an odd-looking picture," said my companion. I looked in the same direction: the press was closing again; I caught only a glimpse of the canvas, but that sufficed: it was my own picture, *on the line*! For a moment my head swam with me.

He walked towards the place, and I followed him. I did not at first hear well what he said of the picture; but when I did, I found he was abusing it. He called it quaint, crude, even grotesque; and certainly the uncompromising adherence to nature as then present before me, which I had attempted throughout, gave it, in the exhibition, a more curious and unique appearance than I could have anticipated. Of course only a very few minutes elapsed before my companion turned to the catalogue for the artist's name.

"They thought the thing good," he drawled as he ran his eye down the pages, "or it wouldn't be on the line. 605, 606 — or else the fellow has interest somewhere. 630, what the deuce am I thinking of? — 613, 613, 613 — Here it is — Why," he exclaimed, short of breath with astonishment, "the picture is yours!"

"Well, it seems so," said I, looking over his shoulder; "I suppose they're likely to know."

"And so you wanted to get away before we came to it. And so the picture is yours!"

"Likely to remain so too," I replied laughing, "if every one thinks as well of it as you do."

"Oh! mind you," he exclaimed, "you must not be offended: one always finds fault first: I am sure to congratulate you."

The surprise he was in made him speak rather loud, so that people were beginning to nudge each other, and whisper that I was the painter.

I therefore repeated hurriedly that I really must go, or I should miss my appointment.

"Stay a minute," ejaculated my friend the critic; "I am trying to think what the style of your picture is like. It is like the works of a very early man that I saw in Italy. Angioloni, Angellini, *Angiolieri*,—that was the name,—Bucciolo Angiolieri. He always turned the toes in. The head of your woman there" (and he pointed to the figure painted from Mary) "is exactly like a St. Agnes of his at Bologna."

A flash seemed to strike before my eyes as he spoke. The name mentioned was a part of my first recollections; and the picture he spoke of. . . . Yes, indeed, there in the face of my betrothed bride, I beheld the once familiar features of the St. Agnes, forgotten since childhood! I gazed fixedly on the work of my own hands; and thought turned in my brain like a wheel.

When I looked again toward my companion, I could see that he was wondering at my evident abstraction. I did not explain, but abruptly bidding him good-bye, hastened out of the exhibition.

As I walked homewards, the cloud was still about me, and the street seemed to pass me like a shadow. My life had been, as it were, drawn by, and the child and the man brought together. How had I not at once recognized, in her I loved, the dream of my childhood? Yet, doubtless, the sympathy of relation, though unconscious, must have had its influence. The fact of the likeness was a mere casualty, however singular; but that which had cast the shadow of a man's love in the path of the child, and left the seed at his heart to work its growth blindly in darkness, was surely much more than chance.

Immediately on reaching home, I made inquiries of my mother concerning my old friend the "English Conoscente"; but learned, to my disappointment, that she had long since missed the book, and had never recovered it. I felt vexed in the extreme.

The joy with which the news of my picture was hailed at home may readily be imagined. There was one, however, to whom it may have been more welcome even than to my own household: to her, as to myself, it was hope seen nearer. I could scarcely have assigned a reason why I refrained from mentioning to her, or to any one, the strange point of resemblance which I had been led to perceive; but from some unaccountable reluctance I kept it to myself at the time. The matter was detailed in the journal of the worthy poet-critic who had made the discovery; such scraps of research being much too scarce not to be worked to their utmost; it may be too that my precipitate retreat had left him in the belief of my being a convicted plagiarist. I do not think, however, that either Mary's family or my own saw the paper; and indeed it was much too æsthetic to permit itself many readers.

Meanwhile, my picture was obtaining that amount of notice, favourable with unfavourable, which constitutes success, and was not long in finding a purchaser. My way seemed clearing before me. Still, I could not prevent my mind from dwelling on the curious incident connected with the painting, and which, by constant brooding upon it, had begun to assume, in my idea, almost the character of a mystery. The coincidence was the more singular that my work, being in subject, costume, and accessories, English, and of the present period, could scarcely have been expected to suggest so striking an affinity in style to the productions of one of the earliest Italian painters.

The gentleman who purchased my picture had commissioned me at the same time for another. I had always entertained a great wish to visit Italy, but now a still stronger impulse than before drew me thither. All substantial record having been lost, I could hardly persuade myself that the idol of my childhood, and the worship I had rendered it, was not all an unreal dream; and every day the longing possessed me more strongly to look with my own eyes upon the veritable St. Agnes. Not holding myself free to marry as yet, I therefore

determined (having it now within my power) that I would seek Italy at once, and remain there while I painted my next picture. Nor could even the thought of leaving Mary deter me from this resolution.

On the day I quitted England, Mary's father again placed her hand in mine, and renewed his promise ; but our own hearts were a covenant between us.

From this point, my narrative will proceed more rapidly to its issue. Some lives of men are as the sea is, continually vexed and trampled with winds. Others are, as it were, left on the beach. There the wave is long in reaching its tide-mark, where it abides but a moment ; afterwards, for the rest of that day, the water is shifted back more or less slowly ; the sand it has filled hardens ; and hourly the wind drives lower till nightfall.

To dwell here on my travels any further than in so much as they concern the thread of my story, would be superfluous. The first place where I established myself, on arriving in the Papal States, was Bologna, since it was there, as I well remembered, that the St. Agnes of Bucciolo Angiolieri was said to be. I soon became convinced, however, after ransacking the galleries and private collections, that I had been misinformed. The great Clementine is for the most part a dismal wilderness of Bolognese Art, " where nothing is that hath life," being rendered only the more ghastly by the " life-in-death " of Guido and the Caracci ; and the private collectors seem to emulate the Clementine.

From Bologna I removed to Rome, where I stayed only for a month, and proceeded thence into Tuscany. Here, in the painter's native province, after all, I thought the picture was most likely to be found ; as is generally the case with artists who have produced comparatively few works, and whose fame is not of the highest order of all. Having visited Siena and Arezzo, I took up my abode in Florence. Here, however, seeing the necessity of getting to work at once, I commenced my next picture, devoting to it a certain number of hours each day ; the rest of my time being chiefly spent among the galleries, where I continued my search. The St. Agnes still eluded me ; but in the Pitti and elsewhere, I met with several works of Bucciolo ; in all of which I thought, in fact, that I could myself recognize, despite the wide difference both of subject and occasional treatment, a certain mental approximation, not easily defined, to the style of my own productions. The peculiarities of feeling and manner which had attracted my boyish admiration had evidently sunk deep, and maintained, though hitherto unperceived, their influence over me.

I had been at Florence for about three months, and my picture was progressing, though slowly enough ; moreover, the other idea which engrossed me was losing its energy, by the recurrence of defeat, so that I now determined on leaving the thing mainly to chance, and went here and there, during the hours when I was not at work, seeing what was to see. One day, however, being in a bookseller's shop, I came upon some numbers of a new Dictionary of Works of Art, then in course of publication, where it was stated that a painting of St. Agnes, by Bucciolo Angiolieri, was in the possession of the Academy of Perugia. This then, doubtless, was the work I wished to see ; and when in the Roman States, I must already have passed upon my search through the town which contained it. In how many books had I rummaged for the information which chance had at length thrown in my way ! I was almost inclined to be provoked with so inglorious a success. All my interest in the pursuit, however, revived at once, and I immediately commenced taking measures for retracing my steps to Perugia. Before doing so I despatched a long letter to Mary, with whom I kept up a correspondence, telling her where to direct her next missive, but without informing her as to the motive of my abrupt removal, although in my letter I dwelt at some length, among other topics, on those works of Bucciolo which I had met with at Florence.

I arrived at Perugia late in the evening, and to see the gallery before the next morning was out of the question. I passed a most restless night. The same one thought had been more or less with me during the whole of my journey, and would not leave me now until my wish was satisfied. The next day proved to be one on which the pictures were not visible; so that on hastening to the Academy in the morning, I was again disappointed. Upon the second day, had they refused me admittance, I believe I should have resorted to desperate measures. The doors however were at last wide open. Having put the swarm of guides to rout, I set my feet on the threshold; and such is the power of one absorbing idea, long suffered to dwell on the mind, that as I entered I felt my heart choke me as if with some vague apprehension.

This portion of my story which the reader has already gone through is so unromantic and easy of belief, that I fear the startling circumstances which remain to be told will jar upon him all the more by contrast as a clumsy fabrication. My course, however, must be to speak on, relating to the best of my memory things in which the memory is not likely to have failed; and reserving at least my own inward knowledge that all the events of this narrative (however unequal the measure of credit they may obtain) have been equally, with myself, matters of personal experience.

The Academy of Perugia is, in its little sphere, one of the high places of privilege; and the first room, the Council Chamber, full of rickety arm chairs, is hung with the presentation pictures of the members, a collection of indigenous grandeurs of the school of David. I purchased a catalogue of an old woman who was knitting in one corner, and proceeded to turn the leaves with nervous anxiety. Having found that the Florentine pictures were in the last room, I commenced hurrying across the rest of the gallery as fast as the polish of the waxed boards would permit. There was no visitor besides myself in the rooms, which were full of Roman, Bolognese, and Perugian handiwork: one or two students only, who had set up their easels before some masterpiece of the "advanced" style, stared round in wonder at my irreverent haste. As I walked, I continued my search in the catalogue; so that, by the time I reached the Florentine room, I had found the number, and walked, with a beating heart, straight up to the picture.

The picture is about half the size of life: it represents a beautiful woman, seated, in the costume of the painter's time, richly adorned with jewels; she holds a palm branch, and a lamb nestles to her feet. The glory round her head is a device pricked without colour on the gold background, which is full of the faces of angels. The countenance was the one known to me, by a feeble reflex, in childhood; it was also the exact portrait of Mary, feature by feature. I had been absent from her for more than five months, and it was like seeing her again.

As I looked, my whole life seemed to crowd about me, and to stun me like a pulse in my head. For some time I stood lost in astonishment, admiration, perplexity, helpless of conjecture, and an almost painful sense of love.

I had seen that in the catalogue there was some account of the picture; and now, after a long while, I removed my eyes, dizzy with gazing and with thought, from the face, and read in Italian as follows:

"No. 212. *St. Agnes, with a glory of angels.* By *Bucciolo Angiolieri*.

"Bertuccio, Buccio, or Bucciolo d'Orli Angiolieri, a native of Cignana in the Florentine territory, was born in 1405 and died in 1460. He was the friend, and has been described as the pupil, of Benozzo Gozzoli; which latter statement is not likely to be correct, since their ages were nearly the same, as are also the dates of their earliest known pictures.

"He is said by some to have been the first to introduce a perfectly nude figure in a devotional subject (the St. Sebastian now at Florence); an opinion which Professor Ehrenhaupt has called in question, by

fixing the date of the five anonymous frescoes in the Church of Sant' Andrea d'Olt' arno, which contain several nude figures, at a period antecedent to that in which he flourished. His works are to be met with at Florence, at Lucca, and in one or two cities of Germany. The present picture, though ostensibly representing St. Agnes, is the portrait of Blanzifiore dal l'Ambra, a lady to whom the painter was deeply attached, and who died early. The circumstances connected by tradition with the painting of this picture are of a peculiarly melancholy nature.

"It appears that, in the vicissitudes of faction, the lady's family were exiled from Florence, and took refuge at Lucca; where some of them were delivered by treachery to their enemies and put to death. These accumulated misfortunes (not the least among which was the separation from her lover, who, on account of his own ties and connections, could not quit Florence), preyed fatally on the mind and health of Blanzifiore; and before many months had passed, she was declared to be beyond medicinal aid. No sooner did she learn this, than her first thought was of the misery which her death would occasion her lover; and she insisted on his being summoned immediately from Florence, that they might at least see each other once again upon earth. When, on his arrival, she witnessed his anguish at thus losing her for ever, Blanzifiore declared that she would rise at once from her bed, and that Bucciolo should paint her portrait before she died; for so, she said, there should still remain something to him whereby to have her in memory. In this will she persisted against all remonstrance occasioned by the fears of her friends; and for two days, though in a dying state, she sat with wonderful energy to her lover: clad in her most sumptuous attire, and arrayed with all her jewels: her two sisters remaining constantly at her side, to sustain her and supply restoratives. On the third day, while Bucciolo was still at work, she died without moving.

"After her death, Bucciolo finished the portrait, and added to it the attributes of St. Agnes, in honour of her purity. He kept it always near him during his lifetime; and, in dying, bequeathed it to the Church of Santa Agnese dei Lavoranti, where he was buried at her side. During all the years of his life, after the death of Blanzifiore, he remained at Lucca: where some of his works are still to be found.

"The present picture has been copied many times, but never competently engraved; and was among those conveyed to Paris by Bonaparte, in the days of his omnipotence."

The feeling of wonder which attained bewilderment, as I proceeded with this notice, was yet less strong than an intense penetrating sympathy excited in me by the unhappy narrative, which I could not easily have accounted for, but which so overcame me that, as I finished, the tears stung my eyes. I remained for some time leaning upon the bar which separated me from the picture, till at last my mind settled to more definite thought. But thought here only served to confound. A woman had then lived four hundred years since, of whom that picture was the portrait; and my own eyes bore me witness that it was also the surpassingly perfect resemblance of a woman now living and breathing,—of my own affianced bride! While I stood, these things grew and grew upon my mind, till my thoughts seemed to hustle about me like pent-up air.

The catalogue was still open in my hand; and now, as my eyes wandered, in aimless distraction, over the page, they were arrested by these words: "*No. 231. Portrait of Bucciolo Angiolieri painted by himself.*" At first my bewildered perceptions scarcely attached a meaning to the words; yet, owing no doubt to the direction of my thoughts, my eye dwelt upon them, and continued to peruse them over and over, until at last their purport flashed upon me. At

the same instant that it did so, I turned round and glanced rapidly over the walls for the number: it was at the other end of the room. A trembling suspense, with something almost of involuntary awe, was upon me as I ran towards the spot; the picture was hung low; I stooped over the rail to look closely at it, and was face to face with *myself*! I can recall my feeling at that moment, only as one of the most lively and exquisite fear.

It was myself, of nearly the same age as mine was then, but perhaps a little older. The hair and beard were of my colour, trimmed in an antique fashion; and the dress belonged to the early part of the fifteenth century. In the background was a portion of the city of Florence. One of the upper corners contained this inscription:—

ALBERTUS * ORLITIS ANGELERIUS

Ipsum ipse

ÆTAT. SUÆ XXIV.

That it *was* my portrait,—that the St. Agnes was the portrait of Mary,—and that both had been painted by myself four hundred years ago,—this now rose up distinctly before me as the one and only solution of so startling a mystery, and as being, in fact, that result round which, or some portion of which, my soul had been blindly hovering, uncertain of itself. The tremendous experience of that moment, the like of which has never, perhaps, been known to any other man, must remain undescribed; since the description, read calmly at common leisure, could seem but fantastic raving. I was as one who, coming after a wilderness to some city dead since the first world, should find among the tombs a human body in his own exact image, embalmed; having the blackened coin still within its lips, and the jars still at its side, in honour of gods whose very names are abolished.

After the first incapable pause, during which I stood rooted to the spot, I could no longer endure to look on the picture, and turning away, fled back through the rooms and into the street. I reached it with the sweat springing on my forehead, and my face felt pale and cold in the sun.

As I hurried homewards, amid all the chaos of my ideas, I had clearly resolved on one thing,—namely, that I would leave Perugia that night on my return to England. I had passports which would carry me as far as the confines of Italy; and when there I counted on somehow getting them signed at once by the requisite authorities, so as to pursue my journey without delay.

On entering my room in the hotel where I had put up, I found a letter from Mary lying on the table. I was too much agitated with conflicting thoughts to open it at once; and therefore allowed it to remain till my perturbation should in some measure have subsided. I drew the blinds before my windows, and covered my face to think; my forehead was still damp between my hands. At least an hour must have elapsed in that tumult of the spirit which leaves no impression behind, before I opened the letter.

It was an answer to the one which I had posted before leaving Florence. After many questions and much news of home, there was a paragraph which ran thus:—

“The account you give me of the works of Bucciolo Angiolieri interested me greatly. I am surprised never to have heard you mention him before, as he appears to find so much favour with you. But perhaps he was unknown to you till now. How I wish I could stand by your side before his pictures, to enjoy them with you and hear you interpret their beauties! I assure you that what you say about them is so vivid, and shows so much insight into all the meanings

* *Alberto, Albertuccio, Bertuccio, Buccio, Bucciolo.*

of the painter, that, while reading, I could scarcely divest myself of the impression that you were describing some of your own works."

As I finished the last sentence, the paper fell from my hands. A solemn passage of Scripture had been running in my mind; and as I again lay back and hid my now burning and fevered face, I repeated it aloud:—"How unsearchable are Thy judgments, and Thy ways past finding out!"

As I have said, my intention was to set out from Perugia that same night; but on making inquiry, I found that it would be impossible to do so before the morning, as there was no conveyance till then. Post-horses, indeed, I might have had, but of this my resources would not permit me to think. That was a troubled and gloomy evening for me. I wrote, as well as my disturbed state would allow me, a short letter to my mother, and one to Mary, to apprise them of my return; after which, I went early to bed, and, contrary to my expectations, was soon asleep.

That night I had a dream, which has remained as clear and whole in my memory as the events of the day: and so strange were those events—so apart from the rest of my life till then,—that I could sometimes almost persuade myself that my dream of that night also was not without a mystic reality.

I dreamt that I was in London, at the exhibition where my picture had been; but in the place of my picture, which I could not see, there hung the St. Agnes of Perugia. A crowd was before it; and I heard several say that it was against the rules to hang that picture, for that the painter (naming me) was dead. At this, a woman who was there began to weep: I looked at her and perceived it to be Mary. She had her arm in that of a man who appeared to wear a masquerade dress; his back was towards me, and he was busily writing on some tablets; but on peering over his shoulder, I saw that his pencil left no mark where it passed, which he did not seem to perceive, however, going on as before. I spoke to Mary, but she continued crying and did not look up. I then touched her companion on the shoulder; but finding that he paid no attention, I shook him and told him to resign that lady's arm to me, as she was my bride. He then turned round suddenly, and showed me my own face with the hair and beard quaintly cut, as in the portrait of Bucciolo. After looking mournfully at me, he said, "Not mine, friend, but neither thine:" and while he spoke, his face fell in like a dead face. Meantime, every one seemed pale and uneasy, and they began to whisper in knots; and all at once I found opposite me the critic I met at the gallery, who was saying something I could not understand, but so fast that he panted and kept wiping his forehead. Then my dream changed. I was going upstairs to my room at home, where I thought Mary was waiting to sit for her portrait. The staircase was quite dark; and as I went up, the voices of several persons I knew passed by me, as if they were descending; and sometimes my own among them. I had reached the top, and was feeling for the handle of the door, when it was opened suddenly by an angel; and looking in, I saw, not Mary, but a woman whose face was hidden with white light, and who had a lamb beside her that was bleating aloud. She knelt in the middle of the room, and I heard her say several times: "O Lord, it is more than he can bear. Spare him, O Lord, for her sake whom he consecrated to me." After this, music came out of heaven, and I thought to have heard speech; but instead, there was silence that woke me.

This dream must have occurred repeatedly in the course of the night, for I remember waking up in perfect darkness, overpowered with fear, and crying out in the words which I had heard spoken by the woman; and when I woke in the morning, it was from the same dream, and the same words were on my lips.

During the two days passed at Perugia, I had not had time to think of the picture I was engaged upon, which had therefore remained in its packing-case, as had also the rest of my baggage. I was thus in readiness to start without further preliminaries. My mind was so confused and disturbed that I have but a faint recollection of that morning; to the agitating events of the previous day, my dream had now added, in spite of myself, a vague foreboding of calamity.

No obstacle occurred throughout the course of my journey, which was, even at that recent date, a longer one than it is now. The whole time, with me, was occupied by one haunting and despotic idea: it accompanied me all day on the road; and if we paused at night it either held me awake or drove all rest from my sleep. It is owing to this, I suppose, that the wretched mode of conveyance, the evil roads, the evil weather, the evil inns, the harassings of petty authorities, and all those annoyances which are set as close as milestones all over the Continent, remain in my memory only with a general sense of discomfort. Moreover, on the day when I left Perugia I had felt the seeds of fever already in my veins; and during the journey this oppression kept constantly on the increase. I was obliged, however, carefully to conceal it, since the panic of the cholera was again in Europe, and any sign of illness would have caused me to be left at once on the road.

By the night of my arrival in London, I felt that I was truly and seriously ill; and, indeed during the last part of the journey, physical suffering had for the first time succeeded in partially distracting my thought from the thing which possessed it. The first inquiries I made of my family were regarding Mary. I learned that she at least was still in good health, and anxiously looking for my arrival; that she would have been there, indeed, but that I had not been expected till a day later. This was a weight taken from my heart. After scarcely more than an hour passed among my family, I repaired to my bed; both body and mind had at length a perfect craving for rest. My mother, immediately on my arrival, had noticed my flushed and haggard appearance; but when questioned by her I attributed this to the fatigues of travelling.

In spite of my extreme need of sleep, and the wish I felt for it, I believe that I slept but little that night. I am not certain, however, for I can only remember that as soon as I lay down my head began to whirl till I seemed to be lifted out of my bed; but whether this were in waking or a part of some distempered dream, I cannot determine. This, however, is the last thing I can recall. The next morning I was in a raging fever, which lasted for five weeks.

Health and consciousness came back to me by degrees, as light and air towards the outlet of a long vault. At length, one day, I sat up in bed for the first time. My head felt light in the pillows; and the sunshine that warmed the room made my blood creep refreshingly. My father and mother were both with me.

As sense had deserted my mind, so had it returned, in the form of one constant thought. But this was now grown peremptory, absolute, uncompromising, and seemed to cry within me for speech, till silence became a torment. To-day, therefore, feeling for the first time, since my gradual recovery, enough of strength for the effort, I resolved that I would at last tell the whole to my parents. Having first warned them of the extraordinary nature of the disclosure I was about to make, I accordingly began. Before I had gone far with my story, however, my mother fell back in her seat, sobbing violently; then rose, and running up to me, kissed me many times, still sobbing and calling me her poor boy. She then left the room. I looked towards my father, and saw that he had turned away his face. In a few moments he rose also without looking at me, and went out as my mother had done.

I could not quite account for this, but was so weary of doubt and

conjecture, that I was content to attribute it to the feelings excited by my narration and the pity for all those troubles which the events I spoke of had brought upon me. It may appear strange, but I believe it to have been the fact, that the startling and portentous reality which those events had for me, while it left me fully prepared for wonder and perturbation on the part of my hearers, prevented the idea from even occurring to me that, as far as belief went, there could be more hesitation in another's than in my own.

It was not long before my father returned. On my questioning him as to the cause of my mother's excitement, he made no explicit answer, but begged to hear the remainder of what I had to disclose. I went on, therefore, and told my tale to the end. When I had finished, my father again appeared deeply affected; but soon recovering himself, endeavoured, by reasoning, to persuade me either that the circumstances I had described had no foundation save in my own diseased fancy, or else that at the time of their occurrence incipient illness had caused me to magnify very ordinary events into marvels and omens.

Finding that I still persisted in my conviction of their actuality, he then informed me that the matters I had related were already known to himself and to my mother through the disjointed ravings of my long delirium, in which I had dwelt on the same theme incessantly; and that their grief, which I had remarked, was occasioned by hearing me discourse thus connectedly on the same wild and unreal subject, after they had hoped me to be on the road to recovery. To convince me that this could merely be the effect of prolonged illness, he led me to remark that I had never till then alluded to the topic, either by word or in any of my letters, although, by my account, the chain of coincidences had already begun before I left England. Lastly, he implored me most earnestly at once to resist and dispel this fantastic brain sickness, lest the same idea, allowed to retain possession of my mind, might end,—as he dreaded to think that it indeed might,—by endangering my reason.

My father's last words struck me like a stone in the mouth; there was no longer any answer that I could make. I was very weak at the time, and I believe I lay down in my bed and sobbed. I remember it was on that day that it seemed to me of no use to see Mary again, or, indeed, to strive again after any aim I had had, and that for the first time I wished to die; and then it was that there came distinctly, such as it may never have come to any other man, the unutterable suspicion of the vanity of death.

From that day until I was able to leave my bed, I never in any way alluded to the same terrible subject; but I feared my father's eye as though I had been indeed a madman. It is a wonder that I did not really lose my senses. I lived in a continual panic lest I should again speak of that matter unconsciously, and used to repeat inwardly, for hours together, words enjoining myself to silence. Several friends of the family, who had made constant inquiries during my illness, now wished to see me; but this I strictly refused, being in fear that my incubus might get the better of me, and that I might suddenly implore them to say if they had any recollection of a former existence. Even a voice or a whistle from the street would set me wondering whether that man also had lived before, and if so, why I alone should be cursed with this awful knowledge. It was useless even to seek relief in books; for the name of any historical character occurring at once disturbed my fevered mind with conjectures as to what name its possessor *now* bore, who he was, and in what country his lot was cast.

For another week after that day I was confined to my room, and then at last I might go forth. Latterly, I had scarcely spoken to any one, but I do not think that either my father or my mother imagined I had forgotten. It was on a Sunday that I left the house for the first time. Some person must have been buried at the neighbouring church very

early that morning, for I recollect that the first thing I heard upon waking was the funeral bell. I had had, during the night, but a restless throbbing kind of sleep ; and I suppose it was my excited nerves which made me wait with a feeling of ominous dread through the long pauses of the tolling, unbroken as they were by any sound from the silent Sunday streets, except the twitter of birds about the housetops. The last knell had long ceased, and I had been lying for some time in bitter reverie, when the bells began to ring for church. I cannot express the sudden refreshing joy which filled me at that moment. I rose from my bed, and kneeling down, prayed while the sound lasted.

On joining my parents at breakfast, I made my mother repeat to me once more how many times Mary had called during my illness, and all that she had said and done. They told me that she would probably be there that morning ; but my impatience would not permit me to wait ; I must go and seek her myself at once. Often already, said my parents, she had wished and begged to see me, but they had feared for my strength. This was in my thoughts as I left the house ; and when, shutting the door behind me, I stood once again in the living sunshine, it seemed as if her love burst around me like music.

I set out hastily in the well-known direction of Mary's house. While I walked through the crowded streets, the sense of reality grew upon me at every step, and for the first time during some months I felt a man among men. Any artist or thoughtful man whatsoever, whose life has passed in a large city, can scarcely fail, in course of time, to have some association connecting each spot continually passed and repassed with the labours of his own mind. In the woods and fields every place has its proper spell and mystery, and needs no consecration from thought ; but wherever in the daily walk through the thronged and jarring city, the soul has read some knowledge from life, or laboured towards some birth within its own silence, there abides the glory of that hour, and the cloud rests there before an unseen tabernacle. And thus now, with myself, old trains of thought and the conceptions of former years came back as I passed from one swarming resort to another, and seemed, by contrast, to wake my spirit from its wild and fantastic broodings to a consciousness of something like actual existence ; as the mere reflections of objects, sunk in the vague pathless water, appear almost to strengthen it into substance.

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EXHIBITION OF MODERN BRITISH ART AT THE OLD WATER-COLOUR GALLERY, 1850

THE principal claim to support made by the promoters of this new Winter Exhibition rests on its being entirely free of expense to the artists exhibiting, even in the event of sale ; no charge being made for space, as at the Portland Gallery, nor any percentage levied on purchases, as at all other exhibitions with the exception of the Royal Academy. Its principal object appears to be to place before the public a collection of drawings and sketches (several of them the first studies for pictures already well known), a class of productions not of very frequent occurrence in our annual picture shows. Its principal exhibitors are of course the same whose works fill the other galleries, and among them may be especially noticed a considerable sprinkling of Associates from the Royal Academy. Of late years, the Association has come to present a somewhat anomalous aspect, viewed as a position in art. Originally instituted as a preliminary step to the highest honours, it now musters a body of young artists so much resembling each other in style, in choice of subjects, and even in the

minutiæ of execution, that it is difficult to suppose, at each new accession to their number, that the young man so elevated is any nearer than before to the full membership of the Academy; since *all* can scarcely be at any time received into the Forty, nor is selection among them an easy matter. The Associateship has thus grown to be looked upon almost as a limit of achievement, at least by a certain class of artists; some of whom would, we suspect, be actually scared, could they contemplate, when signing their names as aspirants for the minor grade, that they were ever to be called on to discharge the duties of a Professorship, for which neither nature nor study has fitted them; utterly lacking as do certain among them education, in the first place, and, in the second place, the capacity to educate themselves. Thus it happens that year after year the corner-places and outposts of the "line" at the Academy are occupied, in a great measure, by pictures so closely resembling each other (though from different hands) as hardly to establish a separate recollection. Meanwhile, year after year, the works of other young artists continue to be ill placed and comparatively unnoticed; one or other of whom, however, in some year or other, finds himself at last on the line, in a little while to be an Associate, and in yet a little while an Academician. Then it is that the question comes to be asked, why he, now suddenly found worthy to take the head of the board, should so long have sat beneath so many over whom he is now at once advanced. And the answer, whether spoken or not, is, that this man was marked by the Academy for an Academician, and not, as these, for Associates; and that verily they have their reward.

These preliminary remarks will not be considered out of place when we see how many of the young men in this Exhibition are evidently striving to do exactly the same thing which others, also exhibitors here, have done,—making use of exactly the same means as those who have gone before them, in hope of the same result and no more.

We have said that the collection consists principally of sketches, and indeed rests its chief claim on bringing together for the first time any considerable gathering of such productions. We will not dispute the plea as a matter of fact, although our memory presents to us certain feet of wall in Trafalgar Square which have been covered annually for the most part, from time immemorial, with works little differing from these sketches except in size. Let us, however, allow that we are here for the first time presented with sketches by British artists; and still we must needs confess a degree of obtuseness as to the benefit, and a certain reluctance of gratitude. It has long been cause of complaint that our organs of veneration are called upon to be influenced by the I.O.U.'s and washing-bills of great men. But has it come to this now—that even mediocrity shall not have its dressing-room? For our part, we have ventured to suspect that the slightest and most trifling productions of some British artists—say Mr. Hollins or Mr. Brooks—might, for any public demand, as well have been held sacred to that moderate enthusiasm which may be supposed to have given them birth. Nay, it has been suggested to us by an unguarded acquaintance that even Mr. Frith, Mr. Goodall, or Mr. Frank Stone, may be conjectured at some time, in moments of unusual languor, to have produced works (say of the size of three half-crowns) which might almost be regarded as inconsiderable, and the like of which Heaven permits the average Briton to execute, so he be only supplied with a given quantity of hogshair and pigment.

Having said thus much in the way of introduction, called for no less by the recent establishment than by the character of the Exhibition, we shall proceed in our next to an examination of the several performances.

FRANK STONE

"*Sympathy*" (1850)

WHETHER the sympathy of the gazer with the painter, or of the painter with his subject, or indeed of the young lady in faded yellow with the young lady in washed-out red, or *vice versâ*, be the sympathy here symbolized, there is no precise clue to determine. But a conjecture may be hazarded that the distress of the fair ones is occasioned by a "distress" for rent; since under no other circumstances could we expect to meet with a blue satin sofa in a place which, from its utter nakedness, can be intended for no part of a modern dwelling-house except the passage leading to the street. These premises, however, are merely, as we have said, conjectural—knocked up at random on the appearance of the premises represented. All we can know for certain from the picture is, that on some occasion or other, somewhere, a mild young lady threw her arms (with as much of *abandon* as a lay-figure may permit itself) round another sorrowful but very mild young lady; that the faces of these young ladies were made of wax, their hair of Berlin wool, and their hands of scented soap. There is one other piece of knowledge distinctly communicated, viz., that such pictures as this will not sustain Mr. Stone's reputation.

J. C. HOOK

"*The Departure of the Chevalier Bayard from Brescia. As he quitted his chamber to take horse, the two fair damsels met him, each bearing a little offering which she had worked during his sickness*" (1850).

THE general arrangement of colour in this picture is very brilliant and delightful, and its first aspect will be highly satisfactory; as indeed it could scarcely fail to be when the work of a very accomplished young artist, as Mr. Hook incontestably is, is surrounded by the incompetence which predominates among the figure-pieces here. But we question whether it would not be wise to carry away the first impression of pleasure, without endangering it by any stricter examination. There is a flimsy holiday-look about the picture, when considered, at variance not only with the simplicity of the subject, but also with truth to nature. One figure, however,—that of the foremost lady—is of exquisite grace and beauty; the head and bosom perfectly charming. As for the good Bayard himself, we suspect that, could he have had any preknowledge of the carpet-knight (with something, too, of the dashing outlaw) Mr. Hook was to make of him, he would not at that moment have been altogether *sans peur*; and that, could he now look at the picture and speak his mind of it, the artist would not find him to be, in an active sense, *sans reproche*. The present work, though not of the same dimensions, may be considered, in subject, as a companion to one which Mr. Hook had last year at the Royal Academy.

ANTHONY

"*The Rival's Wedding*" (1850)

THIS picture, the only one contributed by Mr. Anthony, needs but a little more of finish to have *secured* to it that prominent position on the walls to which its merits, even as it is, undoubtedly entitled it. The

subject, as indicated in the catalogue, is not, perhaps, very clearly developed ; but such pictures as this are independent of any catalogue. To some, the first aspect of the work will be more singular than engaging ; indeed, it is perhaps necessary that the eye should gaze long enough to be isolated from all the surrounding canvases, before the mind can be fully impressed by the secret beauty of this picture. Every object and every part of the colour contribute to the feeling : there is something strangely impressive even in the curious dog, who is looking up at that sad, slow-footed, mysterious couple in the shadow ; there is something mournful, that he has to do with, in the sunlight upon the grass behind him. After contemplating the picture for some while, it will gradually produce that indefinable sense of rest and wonder which, when childhood is once gone, poetry alone can recall. And assuredly, before he knew that colour was laid on with brushes, or that oil-painting was done upon canvas, this painter was a poet.

BRANWHITE

BUT perhaps the most admirable work in any class upon these walls is Mr. Branwhite's "Environs of an Ancient Garden," grand, and full of melancholy silence. It calls to mind Hood's *Haunted House*, and may, we fancy, have been suggested by that poem ; or Mrs. Browning's readers may think of her wondrous *Deserted Garden*. But here the work of desolation has been more complete. Many years must have passed before it became thus ; and since then it has scarcely changed for many years. All that could quite go is gone ; and now, for a long long while, it shall stand on into the years as it is. The water possesses the scene within its depths, as calm as a picture ; the white statue almost appears to listen ; there is a peacock still about the place, to stalk and hush out his plumage when the sun lies there at noon ; the pines conceal the rocky mountains till at a great height, and the mountains shut the horizon out. The encroachment of moss and grass and green mildew is everywhere ; the growths of the garden cling together on all hands.

Long years ago it might befall,
 When all the garden flowers were trim,
 The grave old gardener prided him
 On these the most of all ;
 And lady, stately overmuch,
 Who moved with a silken noise,
 Blushed near them, dreaming of the voice
 That likened her to such.

LUCY

(1850)

THERE can now no longer remain a doubt that Mr. C. Lucy is one of the elect of art destined to contribute to his epoch. In no painter whose works we can remember is there to be found more of resolute truth, while in none is it accompanied by less of the mere parade of truthfulness. The increased solidity of thought and manner in Mr. Lucy's pictures of last year is confirmed in this exhibition ; it is evidently a permanent advance in power. His present subject, "The Parting of Charles I. from his two youngest Children the day previous to his Execution," is one of those hitherto left for second or third rate artists to work their will upon. Truly none such has here been at work. The arrangement adopted by Mr. Lucy is simple and suggestive. Bishop Juxon, holding the young prince's hand, leads him out into the

antechamber where the sentry is posted, and where Vandyck's portrait of the king has been left hanging ; the princess, now on the threshold, looks back at her father for once more ; while the quiet head and pattering shoes of the little boy, who is evidently trying to walk faster than he is able, and the delicate manner in which he is being led by the good bishop, are peculiarly happy in their sympathetic appeal. Charles, standing, raises one hand to his brow ; his face is bewildered with anguish. He is turning unconsciously against the window, and the hand which has just held those of his children for the last time, is quivering helpless to his side. At first, the action of the figure strikes, however, as incomplete ; and indeed, perhaps, something better might have been done with the limbs ; but the feeling in the head and in the children, assisted by the quietness of the room into which they pass, is not the less real for being perfectly unobtrusive.

F. R. PICKERSGILL

(1850)

MR. F. R. PICKERSGILL's Nymphs differ from Mr. Frost's by something of the same space as might exist between a doll which, having put on humanity, has grown to the size of a woman, and a high-art wax-work. The latter are more firm and consistent ; the former retain the pulpi-ness of infancy, and stare with the glass eyes of their primitive status. We may refer, for confirmation, to Mr. Pickersgill's " Pluto carrying away Proserpine, opposed by the Nymph Cyane ;" observing further that, whereas Mr. Frost brings his pictures up to the point he is capable of desiring them to reach, in Mr. Pickersgill, when on his present tack, there is more of wilful imbecility, clearly conceived, boldly aimed at, and worked out with an uncompromising contempt for his real self. Last week we likened this gentleman to an amalgam of the Venetian colourists, Mr. Etty, and Mr. Frost ; in the work now under review we are struck by the resemblance in Pluto and Cupid to the late Mr. Howard ; while the plagiarism from the artist of the Mr. Skelt dear to our childish days is too evident in the horses to escape detection. As regards Mr. Pickersgill's third picture, " A Scene during the Invasion of Italy by Charles VIII.," it is painful to be compelled in truth to say that the artist, who was originally Mr. Hook's model of style, is here something very like an imitator of that same Mr. Hook. We turn with a degree of pleasure to Mr. Pickersgill's watercolour " Sketches from the Story of Imelda." If these are recent works, the artist is evidently still capable of his own style, still retains some feeling for purity of form and sentiment. The story is told in three compartments. The first is not in any way remarkable ; the second, where Imelda sees her lover's blood trickling through from under the closed door, is vividly imagined ; there is poetry in the last. Imelda is dead in her efforts to suck the poison from the wounds of her lover, and the two lie together : a thin leafless tree in the shadow of the wall bends outside into the moonlight which makes the stone steps deathly cold.

C. H. LEAR

MR. C. H. LEAR has this year taken the subject of his single small picture from Keats :—

" Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter : therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone : "—

or rather, he, working from his own poetical resources, has found a sympathetic echo in the words of a brother poet. The heard melody is indeed sweet, so sweet that the unheard may scarcely exceed it: but the parallel is unnecessary; they are like voice and instrument. This picture should hang in the room of a poet: we will dare to say that Keats himself might have lain dreaming before it, and found it minister to his inspiration. Here we will not stand to discuss trivial shortcomings in execution, believing that, when Mr. Lear undertakes—as we hope he will not long defer doing—a subject combining varied character, and whose poetry shall be of the real as well as the abstract, he will see the necessity of not denying to his wonderful sentiment, which has already more than once accomplished so much by itself, the toilsome but indispensable adjunct of a rigid completeness.

KENNEDY

WHILE we are still within the magic circle of the poetic—the truly and irresponsibly pleasurable in art—let us turn to Mr. Kennedy's "L'Allegro." Mr. Kennedy lounges (no less than Mr. Frost picks his way) in his own footsteps year after year; and his pictures have much less to do with nature than with his own nature. Mr. Frost is self-conscious—timorously so; Mr. Kennedy is less alive to his identity than to his ideal, but lazy enough in all things. His picture of this year, like those of former years, does not seem to deal in any way with critical requirements: it simply affords great delight. The landscapes we have all known in our dreams; only Mr. Kennedy remembers his, and can paint them. The figures are of that elect order which Boccaccio fashioned in his own likeness: they will play out the rest of the sunlight, no doubt, in that garden: in the evening their wine will be brought them, and the music will be played less sluggishly in the cool air, and those white-throated ladies will not be too languid to sing. Surely they are magic creatures; they shall stay all night there. Surely it shall be high noon when they wake: there shall be no soil on their silks and velvets, and their hair shall not need the comb, and the love-making shall go on again in the shadow that lies again green and distinct; and all shall be as no doubt it has been in that Florentine sanctuary (if we could only find the place) any ten days these five-hundred years. From time to time, however, a poet or a painter has caught the music, and strayed in through the close stems: the spell is on his hand and his lips like the sleep of the Lotos-eaters, and his record shall be vague and fitful; yet will we be in waiting, and open our eyes and our ears, for the broken song has snatches of an enchanted harmony, and the glimpses are glimpses of Eden.

COPE

(1850)

THE subject of Mr. Cope's principal picture is from the 4th Act of *King Lear* :—

"Oh! my dear father! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine on my lips: and may this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!"

Nearly identical, it may be remembered, was the theme of Mr. F. M. Brown's work of last year, the most remarkable contribution to the then Free Exhibition; and a comparison of the two renderings may help us to some conclusions. Firstly, Mr. Cope has assigned a more

prominent place to the music, and has attempted more of physical beauty and of differences of age and position in his singers, the chief of whom, we submit, is man or woman, at option of the spectator. The other picture had a background of music ; but its subject was emphatically the filial love. There lay the potential influence ; and to this the resources appealing to sense were but a ministration. Yet the subordination of the persons doing did not detract from the full presentment of the thing done, to which the ostensible action was referred by the waiting and listening heads of Kent and of the Fool—a character not introduced by Mr. Cope. The latter, in keeping strictly to the text, —“ In the heaviness of sleep we put fresh garments on him,”—has, we think, acted well, though the result is necessarily a less obvious and immediate realization ; but, in all that relates to the characters of Lear and Cordelia, considered as either individual or Shakspearian, Mr. Brown shows a far higher apprehension ; nor must his adherence to appropriateness (as far as possible) in costume and accessory be overlooked, as contrasted with the unknown chronology of Mr. Cope. The colour of both is strong. Mr. Cope’s, however, while specially noticeable for modelling and relief, has a degree of inkiness, as though a tone of colour naturally hot had been reduced by means of corresponding violence.

LANDSEER

(1850)

MR. LANDSEER’S chief work of the present year is “ A Dialogue at Waterloo.” This is, in the truest sense of the word, a historical picture ; —not merely an embodiment of conceptions, however acute and valuable, founded on the records left us from past ages ; this, on the contrary, is itself a record, a part of the time, to remain chronicled ; an emphatic personal testimony. It belongs to a class of art but too little followed in our day, which leaves its own annals, for the most part, to the caricaturist and the newspaper draughtsman ; a class which is more “ historical ” than Mr. Cross’s picture, or than Mr. Lucy’s, or than M. Delaroche’s, as not being painted from history, but itself *history painted*. Let us consider Mr. Landseer’s work. It is now thirty-five years since the day of Waterloo, and Europe is another Europe since then because of that day : and here, in the picture, we have that day’s Master riding in peace after these many years over the field whose name is now less the name of a field than of a battle which he fought. A woman of his house is with him, and to her he is recounting those matters as one who was there and of them. Since then, his labour has been his country’s no less than on that day ; but it has been wrought out in the comparative calm and silence of a peace which, but for him, she might not have enjoyed ; and now, how must his memories crowd upon him as he recalls those events in which he was not an actor only, but the mind and master-spirit of action ! Nothing about him but what has felt his influence ;—the peasantry, whose native soil has become famous and prospered because of his deeds ; the very soil itself, which the blood of his battle has fertilized and increased yearly to a plentiful harvest. All this is here, and much more, both presentment and suggestion. On the execution of the picture, its truthfulness in colour and daylight, we have left ourselves no room to dwell ; we may mention, however, that the action of the Duke is, we believe, one habitual to him, and here admirably appropriate. Still less can we devote space to the discussion, in how far a subject of this class is available to the tendencies of the age. The painter’s highest duty is *to record*, in a manner sufficiently complete for after-deduction : and surely here, if anywhere, thus much is accomplished.

MAROCHETTI

(1850)

THE name of Baron Marochetti, well known, we believe, in Italian art, is here represented by a small statue of "Sappho," of exquisite though peculiar character. The first impression of eccentricity will not be favourable: but manage to look beyond this, and there is a grace and charm in the work which will arrest not the eye merely, but the mind. Sappho sits in abject languor, her feet hanging over the rock, her hands left in her lap, where her harp has sunk; its strings have made music assuredly for the last time. The poetry of the figure is like a pang of life in the stone; the sea is in her ears, and that desolate look in her eyes is upon the sea; and her countenance has fallen. The style of the work is of an equally high class with its sentiment—pure and chaste, yet individualized. This is especially noticeable in the drapery, which is no unmeaning sheet tossed anyhow for effect, but a real piece of antique costume, full of beauty and character. We may venture to suggest, however, that the extreme tension of the skirt across the knees gives a certain appearance of formality to the lower portion of the figure.

THE MODERN PICTURES OF ALL COUNTRIES, AT
LICHFIELD HOUSE, 1851

PERHAPS the best service we can render the directors of this Exhibition is to record, at the outset of our criticisms, their assurance to the public, that other pictures besides those now on the walls are to reach them shortly from the Continent. There is hope here at least, albeit deferred; and, seeing that their collection is a veritable Pandora's casket, whence every ill quality of art is let forth to the light of day, it was certainly desirable that Hope should remain at the bottom.

It would not be much to the purpose to inquire which school of painting shows most creditably here; nor, if a decision were to be arrived at, need any one set of artists feel much flattered by the preference. The only school whose merits, such as they are, are adequately represented in this gathering, is that of Belgium; which, we fear, would scarcely call for many representatives in a place where nothing should be exhibited that was not worth exhibiting.

After this opening, it will suggest itself at once that the great mass of these pictures is such as we shall not attempt to criticize; belonging as they do to that class where examination and silence are the sum of criticism.

Let us begin with the French works; among which are some of the few good things of the collection. If again we decimate these elect, (supposing such a course to be arithmetically possible), we shall find that *the* best work in the place, upon the whole, is Mademoiselle Rosa Bonheur's "Charcoal-burners in Auvergne crossing a Moor." We are rejoiced to be able to lay our homage, at last, at the feet of one lady who has really done something in some one branch of art which may be considered quite of the first class. Sky, landscape, and cattle, are all admirable; and must have been, though the picture is a small one, the result of no little time and labour. The sentiment, too, is most charming: you see at once that the lumbering conveyances are moving

"Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame."

The only fault of the picture consists in some slight appearance of that polished surface which always interferes with the truth of a French

painting where any finish has been aimed at. This, however, detracts but slightly from the pleasure of the general impression. Mademoiselle Rosa Bonheur was previously known to us only by a few small lithographs from some of her works: these had always seemed to us to give proofs of the highest power, and her picture more than fulfils our expectations.

Other French landscapes of some merit are those of Rousseau, somewhat resembling Linnell; Ziem, bearing a strong likeness to Holland, though scarcely so good; and Troyon, much akin to the feeling and execution of Kennedy. These, however, have mostly been hung out of the reach of anything like scrutiny.

Turning to the French figure subjects, we shall find much that is excellent in the contributions of Biard, though he has sent no work of prominent importance. The best is "A Performance of Mesmerism in a Parisian Drawing-room." Here the variety of actions and expressions under the same drowsy influence is very diverting; and there is even a rude grace in the colour, in spite of its sketchy and almost "scrubby" character: but perhaps this is only a study for a larger picture. The same artist's "Henry IV. and Fleurette" has a good deal of pastoral freshness and beauty; though the landscape lacks brilliancy and variety of tints, and the monarch is little better than a *ballet-lover*. There is great humour in the "Arraying of the 'Virgins' for the Fête of Agriculture," a scene from the last Revolution; as well as in the "Review of the National Guard." The pair entitled "Before the Night" and "After the Night" are, however, very vulgar and unpleasant, and must be, we should think, early productions.

The humorous sketches of Adolphe Leleux, relating to the Garde Mobile, have strong character, but are both unfinished and unskilful.

The most remarkable among the productions of Henri Lehmann in this gallery are his "Hamlet" and "Ophelia," a pair of small copies from the larger works, probably made for the purpose of being lithographed. The "Hamlet" especially gives proof of thought and intention,—the brooding eyes and suspended movement of the hand suggesting indecision of character. The "Ophelia" is much less good, and is little more, indeed, than a posture-figure with a sort of reminiscence of Rachel: the proportions of the face, too, betray a very unnatural mannerism. The execution of both figures, though careful, is not satisfactory, and reminds us in this respect of Mr. Frank Stone; having the same laborious endeavour at finish, and the same inability, apparently, to set about it in the right way. "The Virgin at the foot of the Cross" is an utter mistake, of that kind which makes the heart sink to look at it.

In the "St. Anne and the Virgin" of Goyet, there is a pretty arrangement of the background; but the Virgin is mere waxwork, and St. Anne sits listening like one of the Fates in a *tableau vivant*.

"The Woman taken in Adultery," by Signol, is the companion to the well-known picture in the Luxembourg, and one of the couple which have been published. We never much admired these works, though they are not without delicacy and even sentiment of their kind. That at the Luxembourg is decidedly the better picture; though the action of the woman in this other, crouching, and raising her arm as if she feared that the first stone were about indeed to be cast, is certainly the best thing in either of them. The colour is very dull and flat, and the hands of the Saviour much too small. The picture by the same artist, from the "Bride of Lammermoor," (where Lucy Ashton, stricken with insanity, is discovered crouching in the recess of the fireplace,) displays much dramatic power in the principal figure, which is also finely drawn. The subject, however, is a repulsive one, unredeemed by any lesson or sympathetic beauty. And there is a *stationary* look, so to speak, in the figures, and a general want of characteristic accessory, together with that peculiar French commonness in the colour and

handling which is so especially displeasing in this country, where, whatever qualities in art may be neglected, an attempt is almost always made to obtain some harmony and transparency of colour. A word of high praise is due to Mademoiselle Nina Bianchi, for her pastel of "An Italian Lady": it is really well drawn, and shows remarkable vigour. Mademoiselle Bianchi should practise oil-painting, and leave her present insufficient material.

There are few better things in the gallery than a very small picture by Gérôme, bearing the singular title of "The humble Troubadour in a Workshop." It is poetical in subject and arrangement, and dainty in execution, though the tone of colour is not pleasing. Something of the same qualities, but with a want of expression and a servile Dutch look may be found in the "Interior of an Artist's Studio," by Alphonse Roehn. The picture by Beaume of "The Brothers Hubert and John Van Eyck" is a subject of the same class, but in treatment resembling rather the works of Robert-Fleury. John Van Eyck is apparently engaged on his picture of the "Marriage of Cana," now in the Louvre: and we would remind M. Beaume that that work is not, as he has represented it, of the colour of treacle, but rather distinguished by a certain delicacy and distinctness which might not be without their lesson to any modern artist who should be sufficiently "poor in heart" to receive the promised blessing.

Summing up in one sentence of condemnation the platitudes or pretentious mediocrities of Ziegler, Cibot, Henry Scheffer, and Etex, and the execrable Astley's-Martyrology of Felix Leullier, we come lastly to the most important in size and character of all the French works—the Nicean duplicate of "Cromwell at the Coffin of Charles I.," by Delaroche; a picture on whose merits we should dwell at some length, had it not been already exhibited last year at the Royal Academy. Admirable it is in every respect, always taken for granted the artist's view of the subject and personage. We think, however, that it might prove of some benefit to M. Delaroche, supposing Mr. Carlyle could be persuaded to go for once to an exhibition, to stand behind that gentleman, and hear his remarks on the present picture. We fear the painter would find that this is not exactly the "lion-face and hero-face" which our great historian has told us is "to him royal enough."

Proceeding next to the Belgian school, we find another English hero presumptuously maltreated by a foreigner, in Ernest Slingeneyer's monstrous "Death of Nelson." Is it possible that this abortive mammoth is to take its place on the walls of Greenwich Hospital, for which purpose a subscription has actually been set afloat? For our part, we believe that the old grampuses there have enough fire left in them to resent such an indignity; in which case, one would gladly let them have their own way with the daub for an hour or so, if it once got within their walls. Of greatly superior pretensions is Baron Wappers' picture of "Boccaccio Reading his Tales to Queen Jeanne of Naples and Princess Mary." It is far, however, from being a work of a high standard, though a good enough painting in all artistic respects. The face of the Queen, if not very expressive, is beautiful, and the Princess is a handsome wench; but the conception of Boccaccio is commonplace; neither is there anything in the work that demanded a life-size treatment. The other two productions of this painter—"Genevieve of Brabant" and "Louis XVII. when apprenticed to Simon the Shoemaker"—are mawkish, ill-drawn, and ill-coloured in the highest degree. The cattle-pieces of Eugene Verboeckhoven, of which there are two or three here, appear to us extremely overrated. They are very coarsely painted, very loosely grouped, and supremely uninteresting.

The only other Belgian work which has anything to claim attention in it is "Brigands Gambling for the Booty," by Henri Leys. There is some merit here, both of colour and arrangement. We may notice

the absence of any paintings by Gallait, perhaps the best of the Belgian artists.

The German schools can scarcely be said to be at all represented here. Perhaps the most striking picture is that of "Pagan Conjurors foretelling his Death to Ivan the Terrible," by Buhr of Dresden. Indeed, there is probably no picture in the gallery displaying more *couleur locale* and characteristic accessory. There is expression, too, here and there; but in many of the figures this is sadly exaggerated, and the whole has a somewhat theatrical appearance. The two little pictures from the life of St. Boniface, by Schraudolf of Munich, are very excellent, especially the latter. They are the work of an artist who thoroughly knows his art. In a collection like the present one, such productions, though the subjects have no dramatic interest, are an indescribable relief. Still more so are the "Subjects on Porcelain," chiefly from the Italian masters, by Pragers of Munich.

The "Young Girl at a Window," by Herman Schultz of Berlin, has a very sweet German face, but is flatly painted; the "Nymphs of the Grotto," by Steinbruck of Düsseldorf, is pretty and fanciful; the "Monk demanding Gretchen's Jewels," from *Faust*, by Bendixen, is a well-found subject entirely spoilt; the "Deputation before the Magistrates," by Hasenclever of Düsseldorf, has some character, but no art; the "Recollection of Italy, Procida," by Rudolf Lehmann of Hamburg, is a contemptible and vexatious piece of affectation; and the pair of half-figures entitled "Tasting" and "Smelling," by Schlesinger of Vienna, are not such as we should have expected from the author of various popular prints, which, in spite of their sometimes questionable subjects, give proof of much sense of beauty and even poetical feeling.

Of the English pictures we shall have but little to say, since nearly all of them have been exhibited before. The biggest is G. F. Watts's piece of dirty Titianism, entitled "The Ostracism of Aristides." It has something in it, however, which somehow proves what was certainly the one thing most difficult of proof, considering the general treatment of the picture,—namely, that the painter is not a fool. The "Lake of Killarney," by H. M. Anthony, is a picture with a wonderful sky, and two highly poetical brackets; but as it has been exhibited before, our space will not permit us to speak of it at length. The same may be said of E. M. Ward's dramatic but somewhat coarsely painted "Fall of Clarendon."

Redgrave's "Quintin Matsys" assimilates in execution to the Belgian pictures, of which it is in every respect a fitting companion. "The Tower of Babel," by Edgar Papworth, is ill placed, but seems to display no small imaginative power, and is further remarkable as an evidence of considerable proficiency in painting on the part of one whose merit as a sculptor is acknowledged. "Preparation," by Lance, is a bright but scarcely natural-looking picture, with an absurd title. "Titania and the Fairies" is an imbecile attempt by the son of an Academician: it would seem almost incredible that this thing should have occupied a place on the line two years back at the Royal Academy, and its author been nearly elected to an Associateship. "Petrarch's first Interview with Laura," by H. O'Neil, is very ill executed, though rather less commonplace in general aspect than most of the painter's works.

H. Stanley, the author of "Angelico da Fiesole Painting in the Convent," is one of the artists lately selected by the Royal Commission to execute works for the Palace at Westminster. His present picture is hard in outline and monotonous in colour: Angelico is on his knees, with his back to the spectator, so that even his full profile is scarcely seen; and the treatment seems to us altogether somewhat tasteless and wanting in interest; the best incident, perhaps, being that of a second monk who is seen playing on the organ in a dark anteroom.

Another artist commissioned lately by Government is W. Cave Thomas ; whose picture here, " Alfred sharing his Loaf with the Pilgrim," we shall not dwell upon, as it has been seen at the Royal Academy. It is only fair that the same excuse should come to the rescue of the picture from the life of Beatrice Cenci, by Willes Maddox ; on which, both as regards subject and artistic qualities, we should otherwise have a very decided opinion to express.

By young and unknown English artists, there seems to be scarcely anything. Some prettiness and rather nice painting, though without much expression or sentiment, will be found in " Cinderella," by W. S. Burton. There appears to be a feeling for colour in a rather incomprehensible performance by W. D. Telfer, entitled " The Baron's Hand," which is hung nearly out of sight. We may mention, however, that our notice was attracted to it by the recollection of a far superior picture in the same name, which we saw lately, happening to pay a visit to that now somewhat renovated sarcophagus of art, the Pantheon, in Oxford Street. The subject of the picture in question is " Ariel on the Bat's back " ; and it possesses undoubted evidence of the qualities of a colourist, though as yet hardly developed, as well as a kind of fantastic unearthliness in conception. In the catalogue of the present exhibition occur the titles of two other paintings by the same artist, but we looked for them in vain on the walls.

We have now concluded what we have to say of this gallery. To argue, from its contents, anything as regards the relative position of the different schools, would of course be out of the question, since among the specimens contributed are scarcely any from artists who enjoy a decided celebrity in their respective countries. For our part, we have sufficient reliance on the sound qualities of a few of our own best painters to entertain some regret that on their part, as well as that of foreign schools, no attempt has been made in the present instance to enter into anything which deserves to be called a competition.

EXHIBITION OF SKETCHES AND DRAWINGS IN PALL MALL EAST, 1851

THIS is the second year of an experiment which promises to prove a successful one. The sketches exhibited number about an equal proportion of oil and water-colour, and include contributions from members of all our artistic bodies. Among those from Suffolk Street, however, we are sorry to miss Mr. Anthony ; who, we trust, does not intend to withdraw his co-operation from this annual gathering.

In productions like sketches, where success in the general result depends almost entirely on dexterous handling of the material, the real superiority is, of course, more than ever to be argued chiefly from the presence of something like intellectual purpose in choice of subject and arrangement. We shall therefore endeavour, in the first place, to determine where, in the present collection, this quality is to be found.

This brings us at once to Mr. Cope, Mr. Maddox Brown, Mr. Cave Thomas, Mr. Cross, and Mr. Armitage ; in whose contributions may be summed up the amount of thought or meaning contained in the gallery. We do not recollect to have seen any work in which all the *essentials* of a subject were more nobly discerned and concentrated than they are in Mr. Cope's " Griselda separated from her Child," of which a sketch is exhibited here. Mr. Maddox Brown's " Composition illustrative of English Poetry " shows that his large picture of " Chaucer at the Court of Edward III.," seen this year at the Royal Academy Exhibition, was in fact only the central compartment of a very extensive work, embodying, in its side-pieces, personations of our greatest succeeding poets, and other symbolical adjuncts. As regards pictorial

effect, it is to be regretted that these were not added to the exhibited picture, since, in the sketch, their chaste and sober tone completely does away with that somewhat confused appearance, resulting from a redundancy of draperies and conflicting colours, which was noticed in the "Chaucer." The design is admirable, both in conception and carrying-out. The symbolical subject by Mr. Cave Thomas, where the last watchers of the earth are gathered together in a chamber, while outside the Son of Man is seen, habited as a pilgrim, coming noiselessly through the moonlight, may without exaggeration be said to rank, as regards its aim, among the loftiest embodiments which art has yet attempted from Scripture. The mere selection of the glorious words of the text (Mark, ch. xiii. v. 34) is in itself a proof of a fine and penetrative mind. Mr. Thomas exhibited a drawing for this work last year at the Royal Academy, and he now gives us a sketch in oils. We are fully aware of the importance of consideration to an artist who really has an idea to work upon; but we hope the *picture* is to come at some time or other. At present it seems to us that much of the costume and accessories would be susceptible of improvement; being too decidedly Teutonic for so abstract a theme. Mr. Thomas exhibits here also "The Fruit-Bearer" and "Sketch for the Compartment of Justice, House of Lords." The two other artists we have named above, Mr. Cross and Mr. Armitage, have sent, the former, two studies for "The Burial of the Princes in the Tower"—of which we prefer the less finished one, which, though perhaps almost too slight for exhibition, shows the greater share of dramatic faculty; and the latter, a sketch for "Samson Grinding Corn for the Philistines"—not very well executed, nor by any means representing the merits of the fine picture for which it was a preparation.

In the second order of figure-pieces, the best are the contributions of Messrs. Hook, Egg, and Lewis. Mr. Hook's study for the "Dream of Venice" is among the most charming things of the kind we know, and certainly superior in various respects to the picture. The finest among the drawings sent by Mr. Lewis (the painter of that talisman of art "The Harem") is the "Lord Viscount Castlereagh," represented in Eastern costume. In Mr. Egg's "Anticipation"—a young lady glancing over an opera-bill—the features are perhaps slightly out of drawing, but the colour is most gorgeous; in this respect, indeed, it exhibits more unmistakeable power than anything here. Mr. Frith, an artist whose name is generally associated with that of Mr. Egg (while in fact there are no two painters whose chief characteristics are much more different), sends a half-length figure of a lady in an opera box—very loose as to arrangement, wherein the principal value of such things should consist. He has also here the "Original Sketch for the Picture of the Bourgeois Gentilhomme"—which is a fair specimen of his usual style of painting, the picture having been among his happiest efforts; and the "Squire Relating his Adventures"—which is not a fair specimen of him, nor would be indeed of most other artists.

Of Mr. E. M. Ward's couple—one, a study for a figure in his last picture, and the other, a sketch for "La Fleur's Departure from Montreuil"—the latter is the more interesting. Perhaps nothing can well be more repulsive than the prurient physiognomy of Mr. O'Neil's "Novel-Reader": there is no name on the cover of the book, so that the fancy is free to choose between "Sofie," "Justine," and "Faublas." Several studies of flowers here, by the same artist, are so good as to leave us a hope that he deserves to be ashamed of himself for his notion of female beauty. Regarding Mr. F. R. Pickersgill's large sketch for "Rinaldo destroying the Enchanted Forest," the only point admitting of argument is as to whether the sketch or the picture be the more meretricious in style; unless indeed we were disposed to discuss which of the female figures is the most unlike a woman. Much better, however, and in their way displaying a high sense of colour,

are Mr. Pickersgill's slighter sketches, in which the beauties of his present system of painting are more apparent than in his pictures. Indeed, the one of the "Contest for the Girdle of Florimel" is exceedingly brilliant and delightful. Mr. Kenny Meadows's drawing entitled "Which is the taller?" has much grace and spirit; but we had far rather meet him in the more intellectual class of subjects, where, when he chooses, no one can show to greater advantage. Mr. Hine's "Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries" might belong also to the "Odd Fellows" as regards his appearance, which is very quaint and humoristic. Mr. Gilbert's "Sancho Panza" is a clever pen-and-ink drawing; but it has, in common with the artist's other productions here, a disagreeable air of "book-keeping" dexterity with the pen. Mr. Webster's contributions are of that utterly uninteresting class which can only be redeemed by the highest artistic finish. Mr. Cattermole has several very effective drawings in his well-known and peculiar style. Everything about Mr. Uwins's sketches here is of a very obvious description; especially the intimation that the picture of "Sir Guyon at the Boure of Bliss" is "in the artist's own possession;"—we should think so. The mild-drawn domesticities of Mr. Marshall, the frozen "Frosts" of Mr. Rolt, and that omnipresent "Gleaner" by the relentless Mr. Brooks, are only not worse than it was possible for them to be: a boundary which has almost been triumphantly annihilated by Mr. Eddis, in the puny and puling production entitled "The Sisters." We were amused with Mr. Templeton's "Study of a Head," the "idea" of which is pompously said to have been "suggested by a passage in the life of Galileo"; whereas it is very evident that the only "suggestion" consisted in the good looks of a model well enough known among artists, and whose portrait has been exhibited scores of times.

Of the landscapes etc. we shall have but little to say; since, notwithstanding the excellence of many among them, they scarcely require comment, the styles of their respective authors being so universally known. Mr. Lucy's "Windermere" calls, however, for particular mention, as showing how serviceable in landscape-painting is the severer study of historical art: this sketch is of great excellence in colour, and replete with poetic beauty. There is a sketch here, unprovided with any name, by Mr. Turner; and specimens, all very good and some unusually fine, by Messrs. Roberts, Stanfield, Linnell, Prout, A. W. Williams, Cooke, Clint, Holland, Linton, Lake Price, Davidson, Pidgeon, Vacher, and Hardy. The "Sketch, North Wales," by Mr. Branwhite—chiefly known hitherto for his frost-scenes—is really astonishing in depth and gorgeousness of colour; the same qualities are perhaps rather excessive in his other two contributions. In Mr. Hunt's "Winter" we cannot but think that the crude and spotty execution detracts from the reality of aspect; but the same artist's "Bird's Nest and Primroses" is absolutely enchanting in truth and freshness.

In the class of animal-painting, we should not omit to notice Mr. Newton Fielding's "Woodcocks"—very delicately and conscientiously painted, and reminding us in some degree of Mr. Wolf's inimitable "Woodcocks taking Shelter" exhibited two years ago at the Royal Academy.

MADOX BROWN

(1851)

WE come next to a work of very prominent importance by a gentleman who has hitherto been a stranger to the walls of the Royal Academy, Mr. F. Madox Brown's large picture "Geoffrey Chaucer reading the Legend of Custance to Edward III. and his Court at the Palace of

Sheen, on the Black Prince's forty-fifth birthday." This work cannot fail of establishing at once for Mr. Brown a reputation of the first class ; which, indeed, he might have secured before now had he contributed more regularly to our annual exhibitions. And we confess to some feeling of self-satisfaction in believing that, while we watched with interest in various exhibitions the sure-footed and unprecipitate career of this artist, we belonged to a comparatively select band. His works have, as we have said, been few in number, and of a different class from those which, to judge from the circle of their admirers, would seem to possess a talisman somewhat akin to the enigmatic *ducdamè* of Jaques. Yet there must doubtless be many who have not forgotten, and will not easily forget, the solemn beauty of "The Bedside of Lear." And we will even hope that some few have received, like ourselves, a potent and lasting impression from his cartoon of "The Dead Harold brought to William the Conqueror on the Field of Hastings ;" the only *real* work we have yet seen in connection with that now dead-ridden subject, a very knacker of artistic hobby-horses, for here alone was present the naked devil of Victory as he is, gnashing and awful. We believe that there is no one individual in our younger generation of art whose influence has been more felt among his fellow-aspirants, whose hand has been more in the leavening of the mass, than Mr. Madox Brown's. Of his present picture our space will not permit a detailed description, which is fully supplied in the catalogue. The subject is a noble one, illustrating the first perfect utterance of English poetry. The fountain whose clear jet rises in the foreground, as well as the sower scattering seed in the wake of the plough at the furthest distance, have probably a symbolical allusion. Amongst the happiest embodiments of character we would particularize the languid and wasted figure of the Black Prince, propped up in the cushions of his litter ; that of his wife, full of a beauty saddened to tenderness, as she sustains in her lap the arm that shall no more be heavy upon France ; the foreign troubadour who looks up at Chaucer, his feeling of rivalry absorbed in admiration ; and the capitally conceived jester, lost to the ministry of his mystery, spell-bound and open-mouthed. For the figure of Chaucer, whose action, and the appearance of speaking conveyed in his features, are excellent, Mr. Brown has chosen to adopt a portraiture less familiar than the one which he followed when he had occasion to introduce the poet in his picture of "Wycliffe." In effect, the work aims at representing broad sunlight, a task perhaps the most difficult which a painter can undertake. Mr. Brown has been unusually successful ; and the colour throughout is also brilliant and delicate. It may be said indeed that, owing to the great variety of hues in the draperies, the picture has at first sight a rather confusing appearance. This might perhaps have been lessened by restricting each figure, as far as possible, to a single prevailing colour, and by a more sparing admission of ornament and minute detail of costume. Yet this degree of indistinctness may be mainly caused by the light in which the picture is hung, causing a kind of glare over the entire surface, and rendering it impracticable to obtain anything like a good view of it except by retreating laterally to as great a distance as possible. These, however, are but slight or questionable drawbacks. Upon the whole we have to congratulate Mr. Brown on a striking success—a success not to be won, as he must know well, without much doubt and vexation, and many fluctuating phases of study, and whose chief value in his case, however worthy the immediate result, consists in the attainment of that clear-sightedness which can still look forward.

POOLE

(1851)

MR. POOLE is an artist to whom, in virtue of our sincere conviction of his genius, we would claim the privilege of venturing a few words of remonstrance. He has now for several years been in the habit of exhibiting pictures which have placed his admirers in the painful position of being unable to uphold them, on grounds of strict art, against those who are dead to their poetic beauty. Year after year, the idea upon which he works is sure to be among the finest in modern painting ; and yearly he is content that, in all but colour, the execution should be left unworthy of the idea. And we would notice particularly that there is nearly always in his pictures some one personage so unhappily independent of drawing as to reflect discredit on the whole company in which he is found, even if no other were at all chargeable on the same count. Last year, in Mr. Poole's subject from Job, this "bad eminence" belonged to the boy pouring wine in the centre ; this year, in "The Goths in Italy," it has been bestowed, as though in reward of unobtrusive merit, upon the figure of the girl to the left who watches, in harrowing suspense, the overtures which a brutal Goth is making to her childish sister. Surely Mr. Poole must know himself that this figure is too small for the rest, and in every way unsatisfactory : neither will we believe, though he does his best to convince us, that he really thinks hair should be painted like that of the man tying his sandal, or an arm drawn like the right arm of his principal female figure. Not less unaccountable are the folds of his draperies ; being moreover, of the two, rather more like water than his sea, which is represented in something of that artless simplicity (whatever may be allowed for poetic effect) in which it exalts the mind on the transparency-blinds of cheap coffee-houses. Mr. Poole's personages, too, seem, like the company of a theatre, to do duty in all parts and on all occasions. One barbarian we especially noticed, lying on the upper bank, whose identity and recumbent tastes Mr. Poole has traced, we suppose on the Pythagorean system, from the surrender of Rome to the surrender of Calais, thence to the shipwreck of Alonzo King of Naples, and so on to the plague of London ; only that he has chosen to give us the process of transmigration in an inverse order. Even the atmosphere in his works, beautiful as it is to the eye, would appear equally suited to all seasons and countries ; each new Poole, like the pool in Mr. Patmore's poem, seeming eternally to "reflect the scarlet West." But enough : we have said our say, and assuredly much more for the artist's sake than our own ; since we can assure Mr. Poole that as long as he paints pictures whose merit is of the same order and degree as in those which we have seen—even though they should continue to fall short in the respects touched upon—we shall take up our station before them regularly, as heretofore, nor be able to move away until we shall have followed out all the points of thought and intellectual study brought in aid of the development of his idea ; and we can trust him that these will be sufficient for prolonged contemplation.

HOLMAN HUNT

(1851)

AMONG the works embodying the principles referred to, that on which its size and subject confer the greatest importance is Mr. W. H. Hunt's "Valentine rescuing Sylvia from Proteus." This picture is certainly the finest we have seen from its painter ; it is as minutely finished as his "Rienzi," with more powerful colour ; and as scrupulously drawn as

his "Christian Priests escaping from the Druids," with a more perfect proportion of parts. The scene is the Mantuan forest, deep in dead red leaves, on a sunny day of autumn. Valentine has but just arrived, and draws Sylvia towards his side, from where she has been struggling on her knees with Proteus, whose unnerved hand he puts from him with speech and countenance of sorrowful rebuke. Sylvia nestles to her strong knight, rescued and secure; while poor Julia leans, sick to swooning, against a tree, and tries with a trembling hand to draw the ring from her finger. Both these figures are truly *creations*, for the very reason that they are appropriate individualities, and not self-seeking idealisms. Mr. Hunt's hangers may claim to have prevented the public from judging of Sylvia much beyond her general tenderness of sentiment; the exquisite loveliness of the Julia there was no concealing. The outlaws are approaching from the distance, leading the captive Duke. The glory of sunlight is conveyed in the picture with a truth scarcely to be matched; and its colour renders it a most undesirable neighbour. It might have been well, however, to avoid adding to the already great diffusion of hues by the richly embroidered robe of Sylvia. We are tempted to dwell further on the position assigned to Mr. Hunt on the walls of the Academy, in connection with the importunate mediocrity displayed at so many points of the "line"; but, in speaking of the work, we recall the solemn human soul which seems to vibrate through it, like a bell in the forest, drawing us, as it were, within the quiet superiority which the artist must himself feel; and we would rather aim at following him into that portion of the subject which is his domain only.

DEUCED ODD; OR THE DEVIL'S IN IT

I AM sorely afraid that the extraordinary narration which I am about to relate will derive no accession of credit from my stating at the outset that I am a public actor,—one, in fact, whose very life is passed in the endeavour to identify himself with fictitious characters and situations, and whose most consummate triumph would be the bringing his audience to believe, if only for a single moment, that the events going forward under their eyes were of spontaneous occurrence. Indeed, I cannot but look upon this fact of my profession as calculated to be so seriously detrimental to a belief in circumstances which I know to have really occurred that I should have considered myself at liberty to suppress it, had it not been inextricably wound up with the very warp and woof of my story. It therefore only remains for me to record on my own behalf that protest which conscious truth has a right to oppose to all prejudice, based on any grounds whatsoever. At the same time I would remind my reader that the very improbability of the matters I shall narrate ought by rights to be counted as a plea in my favour; since, being fully alive to the disadvantages under which I labour, I should, if inclined to deceive, have at least selected a story more adapted for purposes of deception, and could scarcely be supposed to rush with my eyes open upon the humiliating result of acting like a fool and being thought to act like a knave.

I am proud to say that my practice on the stage has been almost entirely confined to the legitimate drama, in which I have enjoyed a large share of public favour, and now towards the close of my career, may even consider myself celebrated. I have no wish to speak harshly of those who have arisen in the course of my career, and who have endeavoured to introduce new theories connected with parts on which I had long before formed and pursued my own opinion, from which I may add that I have not, at any time in the fluctuations of public taste, seen occasion to deviate. I fear, indeed, that the

days when the embodiment of tragedy on the stage was undesecrated by a study of the petty actualities of common life are passed for ever. I at least have to the last upheld my principles as an actor, and can afford to treat certain recent criticisms with silent contempt. The strange passage in my life which I am about to relate is commonly connected in my mind with the one occasion on which I was weak enough to step down from the pinnacles of High Art, and seem to bestow my sanction on the monstrosities of the modern drama. The mysterious and awful circumstance (for I can call it by no other name) to which I allude might, I think, not unjustly be regarded as a judgment upon me for this single concession to a perverted taste.

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LANCELOT AND GUENEVERE

1. How Sir Lancelot was made a knight at the hand of King Arthur, and how Queen Guenevere crowned him.

2. How Sir Lancelot, being in quest of the Sancgreal, fell in a deep sleep before the shrine, for he might not enter in because of the love he bore to Queen Guenevere, King Arthur's wife.

3. How Sir Galahad, with Sir Bors and Sir Percival, they three being clean maids, were fed with the Sancgreal, but Sir Percival's sister died on the way.

4. How Sir Lancelot was found in Queen Guenevere's chamber, and how Sir Agravain and Sir Mordred came with twelve knights to slay him.

5. How Sir Lancelot parted from Queen Guenevere at King Arthur's tomb, and would have kissed her at parting, but she would not.

WILLIAM BLAKE

BLAKE felt his way in drawing, notwithstanding his love of a "bold determinate outline," and did not get this at once. Copyists and plagiarists do that, but not original artists, as it is common to suppose: they find a difficulty in developing the first idea. Blake drew a rough, dotted line with pencil, then with ink; then colour, filling in cautiously, carefully. At the same time he attached very great importance to "first lines," and was wont to affirm—"First thoughts are best in art, second thoughts in other matters."

He held that nature should be learned by heart, and remembered by the painter, as the poet remembers language. "To learn the language of art, Copy for ever is my rule," said he. But he never painted his pictures from models. "Models are difficult—enslave one—efface from one's mind a conception or reminiscence which was better." This last axiom is open to much more discussion than can be given it here. From Fuseli, that often reported declaration of his, "Nature puts me out," seems but another expression of the same wilful arrogance and want of delicate shades, whether of character or style, which we find in that painter's works. Nevertheless a sentence should here be spared to say that England would do well to preserve some remnant of Fuseli's work before it is irremediably obliterated. His oil pictures are, for the most part, monstrously overloaded in bulk as in style, and not less overloaded in mere slimy pigment. But his sketches in water-wash and pencil or pen-and-ink should yet be formed, ere too late, into a precious national collection, including as they do many specimens than which not the greatest Italian masters could show greater proofs of mastery.

Blake's natural tendencies were, in many respects, far different from Fuseli's; and it is deeply to be regretted that an antagonism, which became more and more personal as well as artistic, to the

petty practice of the art of his day,—joined no doubt to inevitable sympathy with this very Fuseli, fighting in great measure the same battle with himself for the high against the low,—should have led to Blake's adopting and unreservedly following the dogma above given as regards the living model. Poverty, and consequent difficulty of models at command, must have had something to do with it too. The truth on this point is, that no imaginative artist can fully express his own tone of mind without sometimes in his life working untrammelled by present reference to nature; and, indeed, that the first conception of every serious work must be wrought into something like complete form, as a preparatory design, without such aid, before having recourse to it in the carrying-out of the work. But it is equally or still more imperative that immediate study of nature should pervade the whole completed work. Tenderness, the constant unison of wonder and familiarity so mysteriously allied in nature, the sense of fulness and abundance such as we feel in a field, not because we pry into it all, but because it is all there: these are the inestimable prizes to be secured only by such study in the painter's every picture. And all this Blake, as thoroughly as any painter, was gifted to have attained, as we may see especially in his works of that smallest size where memory and genius may really almost stand in lieu of immediate consultation of nature. But the larger his works are, the further he departs from this lovely impression of natural truth; and when we read the above maxim, we know why. However, the principle was not one about which he had no misgiving, for very fluctuating if not quite conflicting opinions on this point might be quoted from his writings.

No special consideration has yet been entered on here of Blake's claim as a colourist, but it is desirable that this should be done now in winding up the subject, both because his place in this respect among painters is very peculiar, and also on account of the many misleading things he wrote regarding colour, carried away at the moment, after his fiery fashion, by the predominance he wished to give to other qualities in some argument in hand. Another reason why his characteristics in this respect need to be dwelt upon is that certainly his most original and prismatic system of colour,—in which tints laid on side by side, each in its utmost force, are made by masterly treatment to produce a startling and novel effect of truth,—must be viewed as being, more decidedly than the system of any other painter, the forerunner of a style of execution now characterizing a whole new section of the English School, and making itself admitted as actually involving some positive additions to the resources of the art. Some of the out-door pictures of this class, studied as they are with a closeness of imitation perhaps unprecedented, have nevertheless no slight essential affinity to Blake's way of representing natural scenes, though the smallness of scale in these latter, and the spiritual quality which always mingles with their truth to nature, may render the parallel less apparent than it otherwise would be. In Blake's colouring of landscape, a subtle and exquisite reality forms quite as strong an element as does ideal grandeur; whether we find him dealing with the pastoral sweetness of drinking cattle at a stream, their hides and fleeces all glorified by sunset with magic rainbow hues; or revealing to us, in a flash of creative genius, some parted sky and beaten sea full of portentous expectation. One unfailing sign of his true brotherhood with all the great colourists is the lovingly wrought and realistic flesh-painting which is constantly to be met with in the midst of his most extraordinary effects. For pure realism, too, though secured in a few touches as only greatness can, let us turn to the dingy London street, all snow-clad and smoke-spotted, through which the little black Chimney-sweeper wends his way in the *Songs of Experience*. Certainly an unaccountable perversity of

colour may now and then be apparent, as where in the same series the tiger is painted in fantastic streaks of red, green, blue, and yellow, while a tree stem at his side tantalizingly supplies the tint which one might venture to think his due, and is perfect tiger-colour! I am sure however that such vagaries, curious enough no doubt, are not common with Blake, as the above is the only striking instance I can recall in his published work. But, perhaps, a few occasional bewilderments may be allowed to a system of colour which is often suddenly called upon to help in embodying such conceptions as painter never before dreamed of: some old skeleton folded together in the dark bowels of earth or rock, discoloured with metallic stain and vegetable mould; some symbolic human birth of crowned flowers at dawn, amid rosy light and the joyful opening of all things. Even a presentment of the most abstract truths of natural science is not only attempted by this new painter, but actually effected by legitimate pictorial ways; and we are somehow shown, in figurative yet not wholly unreal shapes and hues, the mingling of organic substances, the gradual development and perpetual transfusion of life.

The reader who wishes to study Blake as a colourist has a means of doing so, thorough in kind though limited in extent, by going to the Print Room at the British Museum (which is accessible to any one who takes the proper course to gain admission), and there examining certain of Blake's hand-coloured prints, bound in volumes. All those in the collection are not equally valuable, since the various copies of Blake's own colouring differ extremely in finish and richness. The Museum copy of the *Songs of Innocence and Experience* is rather a poor one, though it will serve to judge of the book; and some others of his works are there represented by copies which, I feel convinced, are not coloured by Blake's hand at all, but got up more or less in his manner, and brought into the market after his death. But two volumes here—the *Song of Los*, and especially the smaller of the two collections of odd plates from his different works, which is labelled *Designs by W. Blake*, and numbered inside the fly-leaf 5240—afford specimens of his colouring, perhaps equal to any that could be seen.

The tinting in the *Song of Los* is not, throughout, of one order of value; but no finer example of Blake's power in rendering poetic effects of landscape could be found than that almost miraculous expression of the glow and freedom of air in closing sunset, in a plate where a youth and maiden, lightly embraced, are racing along a saddened low-lit hill, against an open sky of blazing and changing wonder. But in the volume of collected designs I have specified, almost every plate (or more properly water-colour drawing, as the printed groundwork in such specimens is completely overlaid) shows Blake's colour to advantage, and some in its very fullest force. See, for instance, in plate 8, the deep, unfathomable, green sea churning a broken foam as white as milk against that sky which is all blue and gold and blood-veined heart of fire; while from sea to sky one locked and motionless face gazes, as it might seem, for ever. Or, in plate 9, the fair tongues and threads of liquid flame deepening to the redness of blood, lapping round the flesh-tints of a human figure which bathes and swims in the furnace. Or plate 12, which, like the other two, really embodies some of the wild ideas in *Urizen*, but might seem to be Aurora guiding the new-born day, as a child, through a soft-complexioned sky of fleeting rose and tingling grey, such as only dawn and dreams can show us. Or, for pure delightfulness, intricate colour, and a kind of Shakespearean sympathy with all forms of life and growth, as in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, let the gazer, having this precious book once in his hands, linger long over plates 10, 16, 22, and 23. If they be for him, he will be joyful more and more the longer he looks, and will gain back in that time some

things as he first knew them, not encumbered behind the days of his life; things too delicate for memory or years since forgotten; the momentary sense of spring in winter-sunshine, the long sunsets long ago, and falling fires on many distant hills.

The inequality in value, to which I have alluded, between various copies of the same design as coloured by Blake, may be tested by comparing the book containing the plates alluded to above, with the copies of *Urizen* and the *Book of Thel*, also in the Print Room, some of whose contents are the same as in this collected volume. The immense difference dependent on greater finish in the book I have described, and indeed sometimes involving the introduction of entirely new features into the design, will thus be at once apparent. In these highly-wrought specimens, the colour has a half floating and half granulated character which is most curious and puzzling, seeming dependent on the use of some peculiar means, either in vehicle, or by some kind of pressure or stamping which had the result of blending the transparent and body tints in a manner not easily described. The actual printing from the plate bearing the design was as I have said, and feel convinced, confined to the first impression in monochrome. But this perplexing quality of execution reaches its climax in some of Blake's "oil-colour printed" and hand-finished designs, such as several large ones now in the possession of Captain Butts, the grandson of Blake's friend and patron. One of these, the *Newton*, consists in a great part of rock covered with fossil substance or lichen of some kind, the treatment of which is as endlessly varied and intricate as a photograph from a piece of seaweed would be. It cannot possibly be all handwork, and yet I can conceive no mechanical process, short of photography, which is really capable of explaining it. It is no less than a complete mystery, well worthy of any amount of inquiry, if a clue could only be found from which to commence. In nearly all Blake's works of this solidly painted kind, it is greatly to be lamented that the harmony of tints is continually impaired by the blackening of the bad white pigment, and perhaps red lead also, which has been used,—an injury which must probably go still further in course of time.

Of the process by which the designs last alluded to were produced, the following explanation has been furnished by Mr. Tatham. It is interesting, and I have no doubt correct as regards the ground-work, but certainly it quite falls short of accounting for the perplexing intricacy of such portions as the rock-background of the *Newton*. "Blake, when he wanted to make his prints in oil" (writes my informant), "took a common thick millboard, and drew, in some strong ink or colour, his design upon it strong and thick. He then painted upon that in such oil colours and in such a state of fusion that they would blur well. He painted roughly and quickly, so that no colour would have time to dry. He then took a print of that on paper, and this impression he coloured up in water-colours, repainting his outline on the millboard when he wanted to take another print. This plan he had recourse to, because he could vary slightly each impression; and each having a sort of accidental look, he could branch out so as to make each one different. The accidental look they had was very enticing." Objections might be raised to this account as to the apparent impracticability of painting in water-colours over oil; but I do not believe it would be found so, if the oil colour were merely stamped as described, and left to dry thoroughly into the paper.

In concluding a biography which has for its subject a life so prone to new paths as was that of William Blake, it may be well to allude, however briefly, to those succeeding British artists who have shown unmistakably something of his influence in their works. Foremost among these comes a very great though as yet imperfectly acknow-

ledged name,—that of David Scott of Edinburgh, a man whom Blake himself would have delighted to honour, and to whose high appreciation of Blake the motto on the title-page of the present book bears witness. Another proof of this is to be found in a MS. note in a copy of *The Grave* which belonged to Scott; which note I shall here transcribe. I may premise that the apparent preference given to *The Grave* over Blake's other works seems to me almost to argue in the writer an imperfect acquaintance with the *Job*.

"These, of any series of designs which art has produced" (writes the Scottish painter), "are the most purely elevated in their relation and sentiment. It would be long to discriminate the position they hold in this respect, and at the same time the disregard in which they may be held by some who judge of them in a material relation, while the great beauty which they possess will at once be apparent to others who can appreciate their style in its immaterial connection. But the sum of the whole in my mind is this: that these designs reach the intellectual or infinite, in an abstract significance, more entirely unmingled with inferior elements and local conventions than any others; that they are the result of high intelligence, of thought, and of a progress of art through many styles and stages of different times, produced through a bright generalizing and transcendental mind.

"The errors or defects of Blake's mere science in form, and his proneness to overdo some of its best features into weakness, are less perceptible in these than in others of his works. What was a disappointment to him was a benefit to the work,—that it was etched by another, who was able to render it in a style thoroughly consistent, (but which Blake has the originality of having pointed out, in his series from Young, though he did not properly effect it,) and to pass over those solecisms which would have interrupted its impression, in a way that, to the apprehender of these, need scarcely give offence, and hides them from the discovery of others. They are etched with most appropriate and consummate ability."—*David Scott*, 1844.

In the list of subscribers appended to Blake's *Grave*, we find the name of "Mr. Robert Scott, Edinburgh." This was the engraver, father of David Scott, to whom, therefore, this book (published in 1808, one year after his birth) must have come as an early association and influence. That such was the case is often traceable in his works, varied as they are in their grand range of subject, and even treatment. And it is singular that the clear perception of Blake's weak side, evident in the second paragraph of the note, did not save its writer from falling into defects exactly similar in that peculiar class of his works in which he most resembles Blake. It must be noticed, however, that these are chiefly among his earlier productions (such as the *Monograms of Man*, the picture of *Discord*, etc.), or else among the sketches left imperfect; while the note dates only five years before his untimely death at the age of forty-two. This is not a place where any attempt can be made at estimating the true position of David Scott. Such a task will need, and some day doubtless find, ample limit and opportunity. It is fortunate that an unusually full and excellent biographical record of him already exists in the *Memoir* from the hand of a brother no less allied to him by mental and artistic powers than by ties of blood; but what is needed is that his works should be collected and competently placed before the world. An opportunity in this direction was afforded by the International Exhibition of 1862; but the two noble works of his which were there were so unpardonably ill-placed (and that where so much was well seen which was not worth the seeing) that the chance was completely missed. David Scott will one day be acknowledged as the painter most nearly fulfilling the highest requirements for historic art, both as a thinker and a colourist (in spite of the great claims in many

respects of Etty and Maclise), who had come among us from the time of Hogarth to his own. In saying this it is necessary to add distinctly (for the sake of objectors who have raised, or may raise, their voices), that it is not only or even chiefly on his intellectual eminence that the statement is based, but also on the great qualities of colour and powers of solid execution displayed in his finest works, which are to be found among those deriving their subjects from history.

Another painter, ranking far below David Scott, but still not to be forgotten where British poetic art is the theme, was Theodore von Holst, an Englishman, though of German extraction; in many of whose most characteristic works the influence of Blake, as well as of Fuseli, has probably been felt. But Holst was far from possessing anything like the depth of thought or high aims which distinguished Blake. At the same time, his native sense of beauty and colour in the more ideal walks of art was originally beyond that of any among his contemporaries, except Etty and Scott. He may be best described, perhaps, to the many who do not know his works, as being, in some sort, the Edgar Poe of painting; but lacking, probably, even the continuity of closely studied work in the midst of irregularities which distinguished the weird American poet, and has enabled him to leave behind some things which cannot be soon forgotten. Holst, on the contrary, it is to be feared, has hardly transmitted such complete record of his naturally great gifts as can secure their rescue from oblivion. It would be very desirable that an account of him and his works should be written by some one best able to do so among those still living who must have known him.

It is a tribute due to an artist who, however imperfect his self-expression during a short and fitful career, forms certainly one of the few connecting links between the early and sound period of English colour and method in painting, and that revival of which so many signs have, in late years, been apparent. At present, much of what he did is doubtless in danger of being lost altogether. Specimens from his hand existed in the late Northwick collection, now dispersed; and some years since I saw a most beautiful work by him—a female head or half figure—among the pictures at Stafford House. But Holst's sketches and designs on paper (a legion past numbering) were, for the most part, more expressive of his full powers than his pictures, which were too often merely sketches enlarged without reference to nature. Of these, a very extensive collection was possessed by the late Serjeant Ralph Thomas. What has become of them? Amongst Holst's pictures, the best are nearly always those partaking of the fantastic or supernatural, which, however dubious a ground to take in art, was the true bent of his genius. A notable instance of his comparative weakness in subjects of pure dignity may be found in what has been pronounced his best work, and was probably about the most "successful" at the time of its production; that is, the *Raising of Jairus's Daughter*, which was once in the gallery at the Pantheon in Oxford Street. Probably the fullest account of Holst is to be found in the sufficiently brief notice of him which appeared in the *Art Journal* (or *Art Union*, as then called).

Of any affinity in spirit to Blake which might be found existing in the works of some living artists, it is not necessary to speak here; yet allusion should be made to one still alive and honoured in other ways, who early in life produced a series of Biblical designs seldom equalled for imaginative impression, and perhaps more decidedly like Blake's works, though quite free from plagiarism, than anything else that could be cited. I allude to *One Hundred Copper-plate Engravings from original drawings by Isaac Taylor, junior, calculated to ornament all quarto and octavo editions of the Bible*. London: Allan Bell & Co., Warwick Square. 1834. Strange as it may appear, I believe I am right in stating that these were produced in youth by

the late venerable author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, and many other works. How he came to do them, or why he did no more, I have no means of recording. They are very small and very unattractively engraved, sometimes by the artist and sometimes by others. In simplicity, dignity, and original thought, probably in general neglect at the time, and certainly in complete disregard ever since, they bear a close affinity to the mass of Blake's works, and may fairly be supposed to have been, in some measure, inspired by the study of them. *The Witch of Endor*, *The Plague Stayed*, *The Death of Samson*, and many others are, in spirit, even well worthy of his hand, and from him, at least, would not have missed the admiration they deserve.

Having spoken so far of Blake's influence as a painter, I should be glad if I could point out that the simplicity and purity of his style as a lyrical poet had also exercised some sway. But, indeed, he is so far removed from ordinary apprehensions in most of his poems, or more or less in all, and they have been so little spread abroad, that it will be impossible to attribute to them any decided place among the impulses which have directed the extraordinary mass of poetry, displaying power of one or another kind, which has been brought before us, from his day to our own. Perhaps some infusion of his modest and genuine beauties might add a charm even to the most gifted works of our present rather redundant time. One grand poem which was, till lately, on the same footing as his own (or even a still more obscure one) as regards popular recognition, and which shares, though on a more perfect scale than he ever realized in poetry, the exalted and primeval, if not the subtly etherealized, qualities of his poetic art, may be found in Charles Wells's scriptural drama of *Joseph and his Brethren*, published in 1824 under the assumed name of Howard. This work affords, perhaps, the solitary instance, within our period, of poetry of the very first class falling quite unrecognized and remaining so for a long space of years. In the first edition of this *Life of Blake* it was prophesied that Wells's time would "assuredly still come." In 1876 *Joseph and his Brethren* was republished under the auspices of Mr. Swinburne, and with an introduction from his pen. Charles Wells lived to see this new phoenix form of the genius of his youth, but died in 1878. The work is attainable now, and need not here be dwelt on at any length. In what may be called the Anglo-Hebraic order of aphoristic truth, Shakspeare, Blake, and Wells are nearly akin; nor could any fourth poet be named so absolutely in the same connection, though from the Shakspearean point of view alone the "marvellous," nay miraculous, Chatterton must also be included. It may be noted that Wells's admirable prose *Stories after Nature* (1822) have not yet been republished.

A very singular example of the closest and most absolute resemblance to Blake's poetry may be met with (if only one *could* meet with it) in a phantasmal sort of little book, published, or perhaps not published but only printed, some years since, and entitled *Improvisations of the Spirit*. It bears no author's name, but was written by Dr. J. J. Garth Wilkinson, the highly-gifted editor of Swedenborg's writings, and author of a *Life* of him: to whom we owe a reprint of the poems in Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. These improvisations profess to be written under precisely the same kind of spiritual guidance, amounting to abnegation of personal effort in the writer, which Blake supposed to have presided over the production of his *Jerusalem*, etc. The little book has passed into the general (and in all other cases richly-deserved) limbo of the modern "spiritualist" muse. It is a very thick little book, however unsubstantial its origin; and contains, amid much that is disjointed or hopelessly obscure (but then why be the polisher of poems for which a ghost, and not even your own ghost, is alone responsible?) many

passages and indeed whole compositions of a remote and charming beauty, or sometimes of a grotesque figurative relation to things of another sphere, which are startlingly akin to Blake's writings,—could pass, in fact, for no one's but his. Professing as they do the same new kind of authorship, they might afford plenty of material for comparison and bewildered speculation, if such were in any request.

Considering the interval of seventeen years which has now elapsed since the first publication of this *Life*, it may be well to refer briefly to such studies connected with Blake as have since appeared. This is not the place where any attempt could be made to appraise the thanks due for such a work as Mr. Swinburne's *Critical Essay* on Blake. The task chiefly undertaken in it—that of exploring and expounding the system of thought and personal mythology which pervades Blake's *Prophetic Books*—has been fulfilled, not by piece-work or analysis, but by creative intuition. The fiat of Form and Light has gone forth, and as far as such a chaos could respond it has responded. To the volume itself, and to that only, can any reader be referred for its store of intellectual wealth and reach of eloquent dominion. Next among Blake labours of love let me here refer to Mr. James Smetham's deeply sympathetic and assimilative study (in the form of a review article on the present *Life*) published in the *London Quarterly Review* for January 1869. As this article is reprinted in our present Vol. II., no further tribute to its delicacy and force needs to be made here: it speaks for itself. But some personal mention, however slight, should here exist as due to its author, a painter and designer of our own day who is, in many signal respects, very closely akin to Blake; more so, probably, than any other living artist could be said to be. James Smetham's work—generally of small or moderate size—ranges from Gospel subjects, of the subtlest imaginative and mental insight, and sometimes of the grandest colouring, through Old Testament compositions and through poetic and pastoral themes of every kind, to a special imaginative form of landscape. In all these he partakes greatly of Blake's immediate spirit, being also often nearly allied by landscape intensity to Samuel Palmer,—in youth, the noble disciple of Blake. Mr. Smetham's works are very numerous, and, as other exclusive things have come to be, will some day be known in a wide circle. Space is altogether wanting to make more than this passing mention here of them and of their producer, who shares, in a remarkable manner, Blake's mental beauties and his formative shortcomings, and possesses besides an individual invention which often claims equality with the great exceptional master himself.

Mr. W. B. Scott's two valuable contributions to Blake records—his *Catalogue Raisonné of the Exhibition of Blake's Works*, as held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1876, and his *Etchings from Blake's Works, with Descriptive Text*—are both duly specified in the General Catalogues, existing in our Vol. II. We will say briefly here that no man living has a better right to write of Blake or to engrave his work than Mr. Scott, whose work of both kinds is now too well known to call for recognition. Last but not least, the richly condensed and representative essay prefixed by Mr. W. M. Rossetti to his edition (in the Aldine series) of Blake's *Poetical Works* demands from all sides—as its writer has, from all sides, discerned and declared Blake—the highest commendation we can here briefly offer.

The reader has now reached the threshold of the Second Volume of this work, in which he will be fortunate enough to be communicating directly with Blake's own mind, in a series of writings in prose and verse, many of them here first published. Now perhaps no poet ever courted a public with more apparent need for some smoothing of the way; or mild forewarning, from within, from without, or indeed from any region whence a helping heaven and four bountiful winds

might be pleased to waft it, than does Blake in many of the "emanations" contained in this our Second Volume. Yet, on the other hand, there is the plain truth that such aid will be not at all needed by those whom these writings *will* impress, and almost certainly lost upon those whom they *will not*. On the whole, I have thought it best to preface each class of these Selections with a few short remarks, but neither to encumber with many words their sure effect in the right circles, nor to do battle with their destiny in the wrong. Only it may be specified here, that whenever any pieces occurring in Blake's written note-books appeared of a nature on the privacy of which he might have relied in writing them, these have been passed by, in the task of selection. At the same time, all has been included which seemed capable in any way of extending our knowledge of Blake as a poet and writer, in the manner he himself might have wished. Mere obscurity or remoteness from usual ways of thought was, as we know, no bar to publication with him; therefore, in all cases where such qualities, even seeming to myself excessive, are found in conjunction with the lyrical power and beauty of expression so peculiar to Blake's style as a poet (and this, let us not forget, startlingly in advance of the time at which he wrote), I have thought it better to include the compositions so qualified. On the other hand, my MS. researches have often furnished me with poems which I treasure most highly, and which I cannot doubt will dwell in many memories as they do in mine. But, as regards the varying claims of these selections, it should be borne in mind that an attempt is made in the present volume to produce, after a long period of neglect, as complete a record as might be of Blake and his works; and that, while any who can here find anything to love will be the poet-painter's welcome guests, still such a feast is spread first of all for those who can know at a glance that it is theirs and was meant for them; who can meet their host's eye with sympathy and recognition, even when he offers them the new strange fruits grown for himself in far-off gardens where he has dwelt alone, or pours for them the wines which he has learned to love in lands where they never travelled.

FROM THE POETICAL SKETCHES

[Printed in 1783. Written 1768-77. æt. II—20]

THERE is no need for many further critical remarks on these selections from the Poetical Sketches, which have already been spoken of in Chap. VI. of the *Life*. Among the lyrical pieces here chosen, it would be difficult to award a distinct preference. These Songs are certainly among the small class of modern times which recall the best period of English song writing, whose rarest treasures lie scattered among the plays of our Elizabethan dramatists. They deserve no less than very high admiration in a quite positive sense, which cannot be even qualified by the slight, hasty, or juvenile imperfections of execution to be met with in some of them, though by no means in all. On the other hand, if we view them comparatively; in relation to Blake's youth when he wrote them, or the poetic epoch in which they were produced; it would be hardly possible to overrate their astonishing merit. The same return to the diction and high feeling of a greater age is to be found in the unfinished play of *Edward the Third*, from which some fragments are included here. In the original edition, however, these are marred by frequent imperfections in the metre (partly real and partly dependent on careless printing), which I have thought it best to remove, as I found it possible to do so without once, in the slightest degree, affecting the originality of the text.

The same has been done in a few similar instances elsewhere. The poem of *Blind-man's Buff* stands in curious contrast with the rest, as an effort in another manner, and, though less excellent, is not without interest. Besides what is here given, there are attempts in the very modern-antique style of ballad prevalent at the time, and in Ossianic prose, but all naturally very inferior, and probably earlier. It is singular that, for formed style and purely literary qualities, Blake perhaps never afterwards equalled the best things in this youthful volume, though he often did so in melody and feeling, and more than did so in depth of thought.

SONGS OF INNOCENCE AND SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

[Engraved 1789]

HERE again but little need be added to what has already been said in the *Life* respecting the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. The first series is incomparably the more beautiful of the two, being indeed almost flawless in essential respects; while in the second series, the five years intervening between the two had proved sufficient for obscurity and the darker mental phases of Blake's writings to set in and greatly mar its poetic value. This contrast is more especially evident in those pieces whose subjects tally in one and the other series. For instance, there can be no comparison between the first *Chimney Sweeper*, which touches with such perfect simplicity the true pathetic chord of its subject, and the second, tinged somewhat with the commonplaces, if also with the truths, of social discontent. However, very perfect and noble examples of Blake's metaphysical poetry occur among the *Songs of Experience*, such as *Christian Forbearance*, and *The Human Abstract*. One piece, the second *Cradle Song*, I have myself introduced from the MS. Note-book often referred to, since there can be no doubt that it was written to match with the first, and it has quite sufficient beauty to give it a right to its natural place. A few alterations and additions in other poems have been made from the same source.

IDEAS OF GOOD AND EVIL

IN the MS. Note-book, to which frequent reference has been made in the *Life*, a page stands inscribed with the heading given above. It seems uncertain how much of the book's contents such title may have been meant to include; but it is now adopted here as a not inappropriate summarizing endorsement for the precious section which here follows. In doing so, Mr. Swinburne's example (in his *Essay on Blake*) has been followed, as regards pieces drawn from the Note-book.

The contents of the present section are derived partly from the Note-book in question, and partly from another small autograph collection of different matter, somewhat more fairly copied. The poems have been reclaimed, as regards the first-mentioned source, from as chaotic a mass as could well be imagined; amid which it has sometimes been necessary either to omit, transpose, or combine, so as to render available what was very seldom found in a final state. And even in the pieces drawn from the second source specified above, means of the same kind have occasionally been resorted to, where they seemed to lessen obscurity or avoid redundancy. But with all this, there is nothing throughout that is not faithfully Blake's own.

One piece in this series (*The Two Songs*) may be regarded as a different version of *The Human Abstract*, occurring in the *Songs of*

Experience. This new form is certainly the finer one, I think, by reason of its personified character, which adds greatly to the force of the impression produced. It is, indeed, one of the finest things Blake ever did, really belonging, by its vivid completeness, to the order of perfect short poems,—never a very large band, even when the best poets are ransacked to recruit it. Others among the longer poems of this section, which are, each in its own way, truly admirable, are *Broken Love*, *Mary*, and *Auguries of Innocence*.

It is but too probable that the piece called *Broken Love* has a recondite bearing on the bewilderingments of Blake's special mythology. But besides a soul suffering in such limbo, this poem has a recognizable body penetrated with human passion. From this point of view, never, perhaps, have the agony and perversity of sundered affection been more powerfully (however singularly) expressed than here.

The speaker is one whose soul has been intensified by pain to be his only world, among the scenes, figures, and events of which he moves as in a new state of being. The emotions have been quickened and isolated by conflicting torment, till each is a separate companion. There is his "spectre," the jealous pride which scents in the snow the footsteps of the beloved rejected woman, but is a wild beast to guard his way from reaching her; his "emanation" which silently weeps within him, for has not he also sinned? So they wander together in "a fathomless and boundless deep," the morn full of tempests and the night of tears. Let her weep, he says, not for his sins only, but for her own; nay, he will cast his sins upon her shoulders too; they shall be more and more till she come to him again. Also this woe of his can array itself in stately imagery. He can count separately how many of his soul's affections the knife she stabbed them with has slain, how many yet mourn over the tombs which he has built for these: he can tell too of some that still watch around his bed, bright sometimes with ecstatic passion of melancholy and crowning his mournful head with vine. All these living forgive her transgressions: when will she look upon them, that the dead may live again? Has she not pity to give for pardon? nay, does he not need her pardon too? He cannot seek her, but oh! if she would return. Surely her place is ready for her, and bread and wine of forgiveness of sins.

The *Crystal Cabinet* and the *Mental Traveller* belong to a truly mystical order of poetry. The former is a lovely piece of lyrical writing, but certainly has not the clearness of crystal. Yet the meaning of such among Blake's compositions as this is may sometimes be missed chiefly through seeking for a sense more recondite than was really meant. A rather intricate interpretation was attempted here in the first edition of these Selections. Mr. W. M. Rossetti has probably since found the true one in his simple sentence: "This poem seems to me to represent, under a very ideal form, the phenomena of gestation and birth" (see the Aldine edition of Blake's *Poems*, page 174). The singular stanza commencing "Another England there I saw," etc., may thus be taken to indicate quaintly that the undeveloped creature, half sentient and half conscious, has a world of its own akin in some wise to the country of its birth.

The *Mental Traveller* seemed at first a hopeless riddle; and the editor of these Selections must confess to having been on the point of omitting it, in spite of its high poetic beauty, as incomprehensible. He is again indebted to his brother for the clear-sighted, and no doubt correct, exposition which is now printed with it, and brings its full value to light.

The poem of *Mary* appears to be, on one side, an allegory of the poetic or spiritual mind moving unrecognized and reviled among its fellows; and this view of it is corroborated when we find Blake applying to himself two lines almost identically taken from it, in the

last of the Letters to Mr. Butts printed in the *Life*. But the literal meaning may be accepted, too, as a hardly extreme expression of the rancour and envy so constantly attending pre-eminent beauty in women.

A most noble, though surpassingly quaint example of Blake's loving sympathy with all forms of created life, as well as of the kind of oracular power which he possessed of giving vigorous expression to abstract or social truths, will be found in the *Auguries of Innocence*. It is a somewhat tangled skein of thought, but stored throughout with the riches of simple wisdom.

Quaintness reaches its climax in *William Bond*, which may be regarded as a kind of glorified street-ballad. One point that requires to be noted is that the term "fairies" is evidently used to indicate passionate emotions, while "angels" are spirits of cold coercion. The close of the ballad is very beautiful. It is not long since there seemed to dawn on the present writer a meaning in this ballad not discovered before. Should we not connect it with the lines *In a Myrtle Shade* the meaning of which is obvious to all knowers of Blake as bearing on marriage? And may not "William Bond" thus be William Blake, the bondman of the "lovely myrtle tree"? It is known that the shadow of jealousy, far from unfounded, fell on poor Catherine Blake's married life at one moment, and it has been stated that this jealousy culminated in a terrible and difficult crisis. We ourselves can well imagine that this ballad is but a literal relation, with such emotional actors, of some transfiguring trance and passion of mutual tears from which Blake arose no longer "bond" to his myrtle-tree, but with that love, purged of all drossier element, whose last death-bed accent was, "Kate, you have ever been an angel to me!"

The ballad of *William Bond* has great spiritual beauties, whatever its meaning; and it is one of only two examples, in this form, occurring among Blake's lyrics. The other is called *Long John Brown and Little Mary Bell*, and perhaps the reader may be sufficiently surprised without it.

The shorter poems, and even the fragments, afford many instances of that exquisite metrical gift and rightness in point of form which constitute Blake's special glory among his contemporaries, even more eminently perhaps than the grander command of mental resources which is also his. Such qualities of pure perfection in *writing verse* as he perpetually without effort displayed are to be met with among those elder poets whom he loved, and such again are now looked upon as the peculiar trophies of a school which has arisen since his time; but he alone (let it be repeated and remembered) possessed them *then*, and possessed them in clear completeness. Colour and metre, these are the true patents of nobility in painting and poetry, taking precedence of all intellectual claims; and it is by virtue of these, first of all, that Blake holds, in both arts, a rank which cannot be taken from him.

Of the *Epigrams on Art*, which conclude this section, a few are really pointed, others amusingly irascible,—all more or less a sort of nonsense verses, and not even pretending to be much else. To enter into their reckless spirit of doggerel, it is almost necessary to see the original note-book in which they occur, which continually testifies, by sudden exclamatory entries, to the curious degree of boyish impulse which was one of Blake's characteristics. It is not improbable that such names as Rembrandt, Rubens, Correggio, Reynolds, may have met the reader's eye before in a very different sort of context from that which surrounds them in the surprising poetry of this their brother artist; and certainly they are made to do service here as scarecrows to the crops of a rather jealous husbandman. And for all that, I have my strong suspicions that the same amount of disparagement of them uttered *to* instead of *by* our good Blake, would

have elicited, on his side, a somewhat different estimate. These phials of his wrath, however, have no poison, but merely some laughing gas in them ; so now that we are setting the laboratory a little in order, let these, too, come down from their dusty upper shelf.

PROSE WRITINGS

OF the prose writings which now follow, the only ones already in print are the *Descriptive Catalogue* and the *Sibylline Leaves*. To the former of these, the *Public Address*, which here succeeds it, forms a fitting and most interesting pendant. It has been compiled from a very confused mass of MS. notes ; but its purpose is unmistakable as having been intended as an accompaniment to the engraving of Chaucer's Pilgrims. Both the *Catalogue* and *Address* abound in critical passages on painting and poetry, which must be ranked without reserve among the very best things ever said on either subject. Such inestimable qualities afford quite sufficient ground whereon to claim indulgence for eccentricities which are here and there laughably excessive, but which never fail to have a personal, even where they have no critical, value. As evidence of the writer's many moods, these pieces of prose are much best left un mutilated : let us, therefore, risk misconstruction in some quarters. There are others where even the whimsical onslaughts on names no less great than those which the writer most highly honoured, and assertions as to this or that component quality of art being everything or nothing as it served the fiery plea in hand, will be discerned as the impatient extremes of a man who had his own work to do, which was of one kind, as he thought, against another ; and who mainly did it too, in spite of that injustice without which no extremes might ever have been chargeable against him. And let us remember that, after all, having greatness in him, his *practice* of art included *all* great aims, whether they were such as his antagonistic moods railed against or no.

The *Vision of the Last Judgment* is almost as much a manifesto of opinion as either the *Catalogue* or *Address*. But its work is in a wider field, and one which, where it stretches beyond our own clear view, may not necessarily therefore have been a lost road to Blake himself. Certainly its grandeur and the sudden great things greatly said in it, as in all Blake's prose, constitute it an addition to our opportunities of communing with him, and one which we may prize highly.

The constant decisive words in which Blake alludes, throughout these writings, to the plagiarisms of his contemporaries, are painful to read, and will be wished away ; but, still, it will be worth thinking whether their being said, or the need of their being said, is the greater cause for complaint. Justice, looking through surface accomplishments, greater nicety and even greater occasional judiciousness of execution, in the men whom Blake compares with himself, still perceives these words of his to be true. In each style of the art of a period, and more especially in the poetic style, there is often some one central initiatory man, to whom personally, if not to the care of the world, it is important that his creative power should be held to be his own, and that his ideas and slowly perfected materials should not be caught up before he has them ready for his own use. Yet, consciously or unconsciously, such an one's treasures and possessions are, time after time, while he still lives and needs them, sent forth to the world by others in forms from which he cannot perhaps again clearly claim what is his own, but which render the material useless to him henceforward. Hardly wonderful, after all, if for once an impetuous man of this kind is found raising the hue and cry, careless whether people heed him or no. It is no small provocation, be sure,

when the gazers hoot you as outstripped in your race, and you know all the time that the man ahead, whom they shout for, is only a flying thief.

THE INVENTIONS TO THE BOOK OF JOB

THESE *Inventions to the Book of Job*, which may be regarded as the works of Blake's own hand in which he most unreservedly competes with others—belonging as they do in style to the accepted category of engraved designs—consist of twenty-one subjects on a considerably smaller scale than those in *The Grave*, each highly wrought in light and shade, and each surrounded by a border of allusive design and inscription, executed in a slighter style than the subject itself. Perhaps this may fairly be pronounced, on the whole, the most remarkable series of prints on a scriptural theme which has appeared since the days of Albert Dürer and Rembrandt, widely differing too from either.

Except *The Grave*, these designs must be known to a larger circle than any other series by Blake; and yet they are by no means so familiar as to render unnecessary such imperfect reproduction of their intricate beauties as the scheme of this work made possible, or even the still more shadowy presentment of verbal description.

The first among them shows us the patriarch Job worshipping among his family under a mighty oak, surrounded by feeding flocks, range behind range, as far as the distant homestead, in a landscape glorified by setting sun and rising moon. "Thus did Job continually," the leading motto tells us. In the second plate we see the same persons grouped, still full of happiness and thanksgiving. But this is that day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them; and above the happy group we see what they do not see, and know that power is given to Satan over all that Job has. Then in the two next subjects come the workings of that power; the house falling on the slain feasters, and the messengers hurrying one after another to the lonely parents, still with fresh tidings of ruin. The fifth is a wonderful design. Job and his wife still sit side by side, the closer for their misery, and still, out of the little left to them, give alms to those poorer than themselves. The angels of their love and resignation are ever with them on either side; but above, again, the unseen Heaven lies open. There sits throned that Almighty figure, filled now with inexpressible pity, almost with compunction. Around Him His angels shrink away in horror; for now the fires which clothe them—the very fires of God—are compressed in the hand of Satan into a phial for the devoted head of Job himself. Job is to be tried to the utmost; only his life is withheld from the tormentor. How this is wrought, and how Job's friends come to visit him in his desolation, are the subjects which follow; and then, in the eighth design, Job at last lifts up his voice, with arms uplifted too, among his crouching, shuddering friends, and curses the day when he was born. The next, again, is among the grandest of the series. Eliphaz the Temanite is telling Job of the thing which was secretly brought to him in the visions of the night; and above we are shown the matter of his words, the spirit which passed before his face; all blended in a wondrous partition of light, cloud, and mist of light. After this, Job kneels up and prays his reproachful friends to have pity on him, for the hand of God has touched him. And next—most terrible of all—we see embodied the accusations of torment which Job brings against his Maker: a theme hard to dwell upon, and which needs to be viewed

in the awful spirit in which Blake conceived it. But in the following subject there comes at last some sign of soothing change. The sky, till now full of sunset and surging cloud, in which the stones of the ruined home looked as if they were still burning, has here given birth to the large peaceful stars, and under them the young Elihu begins to speak: "Lo! all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring forth his soul from the pit." The expression of Job, as he sits with folded arms, beginning to be reconciled, is full of delicate familiar nature; while the look of the three unmerciful friends, in their turn reproved, has something in it almost humorous. And then the Lord answers Job out of the whirlwind, dreadful in its resistless force, but full also of awakening life, and rich with lovely clinging spray. Under its influence, Job and his wife kneel and listen, with faces to which the blessing of thankfulness has almost returned. In the next subject it shines forth fully present again, for now God Himself is speaking of His own omnipotence and right of judgment—of that day of creation "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." All that He says is brought before us, surrounding His own glorified Image; while below, the hearers kneel rapt and ecstatic. This is a design which never has been surpassed in the whole range of Christian art. Very grand too is the next, where we see Behemoth, chief of the ways of God, and Leviathan, king over the children of pride. The sixteenth plate, to which we now come, is a proof of the clear dramatic sense with which Blake conceived the series as a whole. It is introduced in order to show us the defeat of Satan in his contest against Job's uprightness. Here, again, is the throned Creator among His angels, and beneath Him the Evil One falls with tremendous plummet-force; Hell naked before His face, and Destruction without a covering. Job with his friends are present as awe-struck witnesses. In the design which follows, He who has chastened and consoled Job and his wife is seen to bestow His blessing on them; while the three friends, against whom "His wrath is kindled," cover their faces with fear and trembling. And now comes the acceptance of Job, who prays for his friends before an altar, from which a heart-shaped body of flame shoots upward into the sun itself; the background showing a distant evening light through broad tree-stems—the most peaceful sight in the world. Then Job's kindred return to him: "every one also gave him a piece of money and every one an earring of gold." Next he is seen relating his trials and mercies to the new daughters who were born to him—no women so fair in the land. And, lastly, the series culminates in a scene of music and rapturous joy, which, contrasted with the calm thanksgiving of the opening design, gloriously embodies the words of its text, "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning."

In these three last designs, I would specially direct attention to the exquisite beauty of the female figures. Nothing proves more thoroughly how free was the spiritualism of Blake's art from any ascetic tinge. These women are given to us no less noble in body than in soul; large-eyed, and large-armed also; such as a man may love with all his life.

The angels (and especially those in plate 14, "When the morning stars sang together,") may be equally cited as proofs of the same great distinctive quality. These are no flimsy, filmy creatures, drowsing on feather-bed wings, or smothered in draperies. Here the utmost amount of vital power is the heavenly glory they display; faces, bodies, and wings, all living and springing fire. And that the ascetic tendency, here happily absent, is not the inseparable penalty to be paid for a love of the Gothic forms of beauty, is evident enough, when we see those forms everywhere rightly mingling with the artist's conceptions, as the natural breath of sacred art.

With the true daring of genius, he has even introduced a Gothic cathedral in the background of the worshipping group in plate 1, as the shape in which the very soul of worship is now for ever embodied for us. It is probably with the fine intention of symbolizing the unshaken piety of Job under heavy affliction that a similar building is still seen pointing its spires heavenward in the fourth plate, where the messengers of ruin follow close at one another's heels. We may, perhaps, even conjecture that the shapeless buildings, like rude pagan cairns, which are scattered over those scenes of the drama which refer to the gradual darkening of Job's soul, have been introduced as forms suggestive of error and the shutting out of hope. Everywhere throughout the series we meet with evidences of Gothic feeling. Such are the recessed settle and screen of trees in plate 2, much in the spirit of Orcagna; the decorative character of the stars in plate 12; the Leviathan and Behemoth in plate 15, grouped so as to recall a mediæval medallion or wood-carving; the trees, drawn always as they might be carved in the woodwork of an old church. Further instances of the same kind may be found in the curious sort of painted chamber, showing the themes of his discourse, in which Job addresses his daughters in plate 20; and in the soaring trumpets of plate 21, which might well be one of the rich conceptions of Luca della Robbia.

Nothing has yet been said of the borders of illustrative design and inscription which surround each subject in the *Job*. These are slight in manner, but always thoughtful and appropriate, and often very beautiful. Where Satan obtains power over Job, we see a terrible serpent twined round tree-stems among winding fires, while angels weep, but may not quench them. Fungi spring under baleful dews, while Job prays that the night may be solitary, and the day perish wherein he was born. Trees stand and bow like ghosts, with bristling hair of branches, round the spirit which passes before the face of Eliphaz. Fine examples also are the prostrate rain-beaten tree in plate 13; and, in the next plate, the map of the days of creation. In plate 18 (the sacrifice and acceptance of Job), Blake's palette and brushes are expressively introduced in the border, lying, as it were, on an altar-step beside the signature of his name. That which possesses the greatest charm is perhaps the border to plate 2. Here, at the base, are sheepfolds watched by shepherds; up the sides is a trellis, on whose lower rings birds sit upon their nests, while angels, on the higher ones, worship round flame and cloud, till it arches at the summit into a sky full of the written words of God.

Such defects as exist in these designs are of the kind usual with Blake, but far less frequent than in his more wilful works; indeed, many among them are entirely free from any damaging peculiarities. Intensely muscular figures, who surprise us by a sort of line round the throat, wrists, and ankles, but show no other sign of being draped, are certainly to be sometimes found here as elsewhere, but not many of them. The lifted arms and pointing arms in plates 7 and 10 are pieces of mannerism to be regretted, the latter even seeming a reminiscence of Macbeth's Witches by Fuseli: and a few other slight instances might, perhaps, be cited. But, on the whole, these are designs no less well and clearly considered, however highly imaginative, than the others in the small highest class of original engraved inventions, which comprises the works of Albert Dürer, of Rembrandt, of Hogarth, of Turner, of Cruikshank in his best time, and some few others. Like all these they are incisive and richly toned to a degree which can only be attained in engraving by the original inventor, and have equally a style of execution all their own. In spirit and character they are no less independent, having more real affinity, perhaps, with Orcagna than with any other of the greatest men. In their unison of natural study with imagination, they remind one decidedly of him; and also of Giotto, himself the author of a now

almost destroyed series of frescoes from Job, in the Campo Santo at Pisa, which it would be interesting to compare, as far as possible, with these inventions of Blake.

JERUSALEM

OF the pictorial part of the *Jerusalem* much might be said which would merely be applicable to all Blake's works alike. One point perhaps somewhat distinctive about it is an extreme largeness and decorative character in the style of the drawings, which are mostly made up of a few massive forms, thrown together on a grand, equal scale. The beauty of the drawings varies much, according to the colour in which they are printed. One copy, possessed by Lord Houghton, is so incomparably superior, from this cause, to any other I have seen, that no one could know the work properly without having examined this copy. It is printed in a warm reddish brown, the exact colour of a very fine photograph; and the broken blending of the deeper tones with the more tender shadows,—all sanded over with a sort of golden mist peculiar to Blake's mode of execution,—makes still more striking the resemblance to the then undiscovered "handling" of Nature herself. The extreme breadth of the forms throughout, when seen through the medium of this colour, shows sometimes, united with its grandeur, a suavity of line which is almost Venetian.

The subjects are vague and mystic as the poem itself. Female figures lie among waves full of reflected stars: a strange human image, with a swan's head and wings, floats on water in a kneeling attitude, and drinks: lovers embrace in an open water-lily: an eagle-headed creature sits and contemplates the sun: serpent-women are coiled with serpents: Assyrian-looking, human-visaged lions are seen yoked to the plough or the chariot: rocks swallow or vomit forth human forms, or appear to amalgamate with them: angels cross each other over wheels of flame: and flames and hurrying figures wreath and wind among the lines. Even such slight things as these rough intersecting circles, each containing some hint of an angel, even these are made the unmistakable exponents of genius. Here and there some more familiar theme meets us,—the creation of Eve, or the Crucifixion; and then the thread is lost again. The whole spirit of the designs might seem well symbolized in one of the finest among them, where we see a triple-headed and triple-crowned figure embedded in rocks, from whose breast is bursting a string of youths, each in turn born from the other's breast in one sinuous throe of mingled life, while the life of suns and planets dies and is born and rushes together around them.

There is an ominous sentence in one of the letters of Blake to Mr. Butts, where, speaking of the *Jerusalem*, he says, "the persons and machinery entirely new to the inhabitants of earth (*some of the persons excepted*)."¹ The italics are mine, and alas! to what wisp-led flounderings of research might they not lure a reckless adventurer. The mixture of the unaccountable with the familiar in nomenclature which occurs towards the close of a preceding extract from the *Jerusalem* is puzzling enough in itself; but conjecture attains bewilderment when we realize that one of the names, "Scofield" (spelt, perhaps more properly, Scholfield, but pronounced no doubt as above), was that of the soldier who had brought a charge of sedition against Blake at Felpham. Whether the other English names given were in some way connected with the trial would be worth any practicable inquiries. When we consider the mystical connection in which this name of Scofield is used, a way seems opened into a more perplexed region of morbid analogy existing in Blake's brain than perhaps

any other key could unlock. It is a minute point, yet a significant and amazing one. Further research discovers further references to "Scofield," for instance,

"Go thou to Skofield:
Ask him if he is Bath or if he is Canterbury:
Tell him to be no more dubious: demand explicit words:
Tell him I will dash him into shivers where and at what time
I please. Tell him, Hand and Skofield, they are ministers of evil
To those I hate: for I can hate also as well as they."

Again (not without *Jack the Giant Killer* to help) :—

"Hark! hear the giants of Albion cry at night,—
We smell the blood of the English, we delight in their blood on our altars;
The living and the dead shall be ground in our crumbling mill,
For bread of the sons of Albion, of the giants Hand and Skofield:
Skofield and Cox are let loose upon the Saxons; they accumulate.
A world in which man is, by his nature, the enemy of man."

Again (and woe is the present editor!) :—

"These are the names of Albion's twelve sons and of his twelve daughters :—"

(Then follows a long enumeration,—to each name certain counties attached) :—

"Skofield had Ely, Rutland, Cambridge, Huntingdon,
Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertford, Essex, and his emanation is Guinivere." (!!!)

The first of the three above quotations seems meant really as a warning to Scholfield to be exact in evidence as to his place of birth or other belongings, and as to the "explicit words" used by Blake. Cox and Courthope are Sussex names: can these be the "Kox" and "Kotope" of the poem, and names in some way connected, like Scholfield's, with the trial?

Is the wild, wild tale of Scofield exhausted here? Alas no! At leaf 51 of the *Jerusalem* occurs a certain design. In some, perhaps in all, copies of the *Jerusalem*, as a whole, the names inscribed above the figures are not given, but at least three examples of water-colour drawings or highly-coloured reproductions of the plate exist, in which the names appear. Who "Vala" and "Hyle" may personify I do not pretend to conjecture, though dim surmises hurtle in the mind, which, like De Quincey in the catastrophe of the *Spanish Nun*, I shall keep to myself. These two seem, pretty clearly, to be prostrate at the discomfiture of Scofield, who is finally retiring fettered into his native element. As a historical picture, then, Blake felt it his duty to monumentalize this design with due inscription. Two of the three hand-coloured versions, referred to above, are registered as Nos. 50 and 51 of the Catalogue in Vol. II., and the third version appears as No. 108 in the Burlington Catalogue.

I may note another point bearing on the personal grudges shadowed in the *Jerusalem*. In Blake's *Public Address* he says :—"The manner in which my character has been blasted these thirty years, both as an artist and a man, may be seen, particularly in a Sunday paper called the *Examiner*, published in Beaufort's Buildings (we all know that editors of newspapers trouble their heads very little about art and science, and that they are always paid for what they put in upon these ungracious subjects); and the manner in which I have rooted out the nest of villains will be seen in a poem concerning my three years' Herculean labours at Felpham, which I shall soon publish. Secret calumny and open professions of friendship are common enough all the world over, but have never been so good an occasion of poetic imagery." Thus we are evidently to look (or sigh in vain) for some indication of Blake's wrath against the *Examiner* in the vast *Jerusalem*.

It is true that the *Examiner* persecuted him, his publications and exhibition, and that Leigh Hunt was prone to tell "good stories" of him; and in some MS. doggerel of Blake's we meet with the line,

"The *Examiner* whose very name is Hunt."

But what form can the irate allegory be supposed to take in the *Jerusalem*? Is it conceivable that that mysterious entity or non-entity, "Hand," whose name occurs sometimes in the poem, and of whom an inscribed spectrum is there given at full length, can be a hieroglyph for Leigh Hunt? Alas! what is possible or impossible in such a connection?

THE SEED OF DAVID

THIS picture shows Christ sprung from high and low, as united in the person of David who was both Shepherd and King, and worshipped by high and low (by King and Shepherd) at his birth.

The centrepiece is not a literal reading of the event of the Nativity, but rather a condensed symbol of it. An Angel has just entered the stable where Christ is newly born, and leads by the hand a King and a Shepherd, who are bowing themselves before the manger on which the Virgin Mother kneels, holding the infant Saviour. The Shepherd kisses the hand, and the King the foot, of Christ, to denote the superiority of lowliness to greatness in his sight; while the one lays a crook, the other a crown, at His feet. An Angel kneels behind the Virgin with both arms about her, supporting her; and other Angels look in through the openings round the stable, or play on musical instruments in the loft above. The two side-figures represent David, one as Shepherd, the other as King. In the first he is a youth, and advances fearlessly but cautiously, sling in hand, to take aim at Goliath, while the Israelite troops watch the issue of the combat from behind an entrenchment. In the second, he is a man of mature years, still armed from battle, and composing on his harp a psalm in thanksgiving for victory.

SCRAPS

Essays written in the Intervals of Lock-jaw, Elephantiasis, and Penal Servitude.

Title for comic journal—*Gas*, or the *London Luminary*. Cover, a large gas-lamp with the title on it, and dark view of London street behind.

The "Cratur" of the Irish Volcano; a whiskey-bottle, with little Irishmen swarming up it, and taking fire at the mouth.

For plain scarlet: try laying ground with Venetian or Indian red and white, to the full depth of tone, and glazing with orange-vermilion.

THE RETURN OF TIBULLUS TO DELIA

THE lines under the picture are taken from one of the Elegies of Tibullus, where, on his departure for the wars, he writes to Delia how he hopes to find her awaiting his return. The picture shows the realization of his wish. The scene is laid in one of the bed-chambers adjoining the *atrium* of Delia's house. She is seated on her couch

which she has vowed to Diana during her lover's absence, as is shown by the branch and votive tablet at its head. At present she has heaped all the pillows at its foot, and is resting languidly from her spinning with the spindle still in one hand, while with the other she draws a lock of hair listlessly between her lips. The lamp is lit at the close of one of her long days of waiting, and she is listening, before she lies down to sleep, to the chaunt of the old woman, who plays on two harps at the same time, as sometimes seen in Roman art. Tibullus has just arrived, and is stepping eagerly but cautiously over the black boy who sleeps on the doorway as a guard. He has been shown in by a dark girl who half holds him back as he enters, that he may gaze at Delia for a moment before she perceives his presence. A metal mirror reflects the light of the lamp opposite, and on each side of the doorway are painted figures of Love and Night.

SENTENCES AND NOTES

1866.—Thinking in what order I love colours, found the following :—

1. Pure light warm green.
2. Deep gold-colour.
3. Certain tints of grey.
4. Shadowy or steel blue.
5. Brown, with crimson tinge.
6. Scarlet.

Other colours (comparatively) only loveable according to the relations in which they are placed.

The true artist will first perceive in another's work the beauties, and in his own the defects.

There are few indeed whom the facile enthusiasm for contemporary models does not deaden to the truly-balanced claims of successive effort in art.

The critic of the new school sits down before a picture, and saturates it with silence.

If one painted *Boors drinking*, and even were refined oneself, they would pardon and in some degree revere one. Or, if one were a drinking boor oneself, and painted refinements, they would condone the latter. But the refined, painted by the refined, is unpardonable.

Picture and poem bear the same relation to each other as beauty does in man and woman: the point of meeting where the two are most identical is the supreme perfection.

Poetry should seem to the hearer to have been always present to his thought, but never before heard.

The Elizabethans created a style in poetry, and by misapplying some of its qualities formed their prose. The Annians created a style in prose, and wrenched its characteristics to form their poetry.

Chatterton can only be underrated if we expect that he should have done by intuition all that was accomplished by gradual inheritance from *him* half a century later.

Invention absolute is slow of acceptance, and must be so. This Coleridge and others have found. Why make a place for what is neither adaptation nor reproduction? Let it hew its way if it can,

Moderation is the highest law of poetry. Experimental as Coleridge sometimes becomes, his *best* work is tuned but never twanged ; and this is his great distinction from almost all others who venture as far.

The sense of the *momentous* is strongest in Coleridge ; not the weird and ominous only, but the value of monumental moments.

The deepest trait of nature in fiction will appear as if nothing but fact could have given it birth, and will yet show that consummate art is its true source.

Conceit is not so much the over-value of a man's own work as the fatal capacity for abstracting, from his inevitable knowledge of the value of his achievements, an ideal of his intrinsic power.

It is bad enough when there is a gifted and powerful opposition to the teachings of the best minds in any period : but when the best minds themselves are on a false tack, who shall stem the tide ?

As the waifs cast up by the sea change with the changing season, so the tides of the soul throw up their changing drift on the sand, but the sea beyond is one for ever.

A woman may have some little mercy for the man she has ceased to love, but she has none for the memory of what he has been to her.

Seek thine ideal anywhere except in thyself. Once fix it there, and the ways of thy real self will matter nothing to thee, whose eyes can rest on the ideal already perfected.

No skunk can get rid of his own name by giving it to another.

In receiving an unjust insult, remember that you can afford to despise *it* ; while he who has been guilty of it can only despise *himself* for his act. Thus the advantage is yours.

He belonged to that extraordinary class of persons whom no amount of intellect can prevent from being fools.

Could I have seen the thing I am to-day !

The same (how strange), the same as I was then !

Yet the time may come when to my soul it may be difficult, in such old things, to tell which came first of all the days which now seem so wide apart.

I was one of those whose little is their own.

A GROUND-SWELL

GROUND-SWELL owing to a storm far out in mid sea. Sea quite calm to horizon, except on the beach, where it rises, falls, and eddies, in huge wrestling waves. Effect like the outer dying circle when a pebble has been dropped in centre of a pool.

THE ORCHARD PIT

MEN tell me that sleep has many dreams ; but all my life I have dreamt one dream alone.

I see a glen whose sides slope upward from the deep bed of a dried-

up stream, and either slope is covered with wild apple-trees. In the largest tree, within the fork whence the limbs divide, a fair, golden-haired woman stands and sings, with one white arm stretched along a branch of the tree, and with the other holding forth a bright red apple, as if to some one coming down the slope. Below her feet the trees grow more and more tangled, and stretch from both sides across the deep pit below: and the pit is full of the bodies of men.

They lie in heaps beneath the screen of boughs, with her apples bitten in their hands; and some are no more than ancient bones now, and some seem dead but yesterday. She stands over them in the glen, and sings for ever, and offers her apple still.

This dream shows me no strange place. I know the glen, and have known it from childhood, and heard many tales of those who have died there by the Siren's spell.

I pass there often now, and look at it as one might look at a place chosen for one's grave. I see nothing, but I know that it means death for me. The apple-trees are like others, and have childish memories connected with them, though I was taught to shun the place.

No man sees the woman but once, and then no other is near; and no man sees that man again.

One day, in hunting, my dogs tracked the deer to that dell, and he fled and crouched under that tree, but the dogs would not go near him. And when I approached, he looked in my eyes as if to say, "Here you shall die, and will you here give death?" And his eyes seemed the eyes of my soul, and I called off the dogs, who were glad to follow me, and we left the deer to fly.

I know that I must go there and hear the song and take the apple. I join with the young knights in their games; and have led our vassals and fought well. But all seems to me a dream, except what only I among them all shall see. Yet who knows? Is there one among them doomed like myself, and who is silent, like me? We shall not meet in the dell, for each man goes there alone: but in the pit we shall meet each other, and perhaps know.

Each man who is the Siren's choice dreams the same dream, and always of some familiar spot wherever he lives in the world, and it is there that he finds her when his time comes. But when he sinks in the pit, it is the whole pomp of her dead gathered through the world that awaits him there; for all attend her to grace her triumph. Have they any souls out of those bodies? Or are the bodies still the house of the soul, the Siren's prey till the day of judgment?

We were ten brothers. One is gone there already. One day we looked for his return from a border foray, and his men came home without him, saying that he had told them he went to seek his love who would come to meet him by another road. But anon his love met them, asking for him; and they sought him vainly all that day. But in the night his love rose from a dream; and she went to the edge of the Siren's dell, and there lay his helmet and his sword. And her they sought in the morning, and there she lay dead. None has ever told this thing to my love, my sweet love who is affianced to me.

One day at table my love offered me an apple. And as I took it she laughed, and said, "Do not eat, it is the fruit of the Siren's dell." And I laughed and ate: and at the heart of the apple was a red stain like a woman's mouth; and as I bit it I could feel a kiss upon my lips.

The same evening I walked with my love by that place, and she would needs have me sit with her under the apple-tree in which the Siren is said to stand. Then she stood in the hollow fork of the tree, and plucked an apple, and stretched it to me and would have sung: but at that moment she cried out, and leaped from the tree into my arms, and said that the leaves were whispering other words to her,

and my name among them. She threw the apple to the bottom of the dell, and followed it with her eyes, to see how far it would fall, till it was hidden by the tangled boughs. And as we still looked, a little snake crept up through them.

She would needs go with me afterwards to pray in the church, where my ancestors and hers are buried; and she looked round on the effigies, and said, "How long will it be before we lie here carved together?" And I thought I heard the wind in the apple trees that seemed to whisper, "How long?"

And late that night, when all were asleep, I went back to the dell, and said in my turn, "How long?" And for a moment I seemed to see a hand and apple stretched from the middle of the tree where my love had stood. And then it was gone: and I plucked the apples and bit them, and cast them in the pit, and said, "Come."

I speak of my love, and she loves me well; but I love her only as the stone whirling down the rapids loves the dead leaf that travels with it and clings to it, and that the same eddy will swallow up.

Last night, at last, I dreamed how the end will come, and now I know it is near. I not only saw, in sleep, the lifelong pageant of the glen, but I took my part in it at last, and learned for certain why that dream was mine.

I seemed to be walking with my love among the hills that lead downward to the glen: and still she said, "It is late;" but the wind was glenwards, and said, "Hither." And still she said, "Home grows far;" but the rooks flew glenwards, and said, "Hither." And still she said, "Come back;" but the sun had set, and the moon laboured towards the glen, and said, "Hither." And my heart said in me, "Aye, thither at last." Then we stood on the margin of the slope, with the apple-trees beneath us; and the moon bade the clouds fall from her, and sat in her throne like the sun at noon-day: and none of the apple-trees were bare now, though autumn was far worn, but fruit and blossom covered them together. And they were too thick to see through clearly; but looking far down I saw a white hand holding forth an apple, and heard the first notes of the Siren's song. Then my love clung to me and wept; but I began to struggle down the slope through the thick wall of bough and fruit and blossom, scattering them as the storm scatters the dead leaves; for that one apple only would my heart have. And my love snatched at me as I went; but the branches I thrust away sprang back on my path, and tore her hands and face: and the last I knew of her was the lifting of her hands to heaven as she cried aloud above me, while I still forced my way downwards. And now the Siren's song rose clearer as I went. At first she sang, "Come to Love;" and of the sweetness of Love she said many things. And next she sang, "Come to Life;" and Life was sweet in her song. But long before I reached her, she knew that all her will was mine: and then her voice rose softer than ever, and her words were, "Come to Death;" and Death's name in her mouth was the very swoon of all sweetest things that be. And then my path cleared; and she stood over against me in the fork of the tree I knew so well, blazing now like a lamp beneath the moon. And one kiss I had of her mouth, as I took the apple from her hand. But while I bit it, my brain whirled and my foot stumbled; and I felt my crashing fall through the tangled boughs beneath her feet, and saw the dead white faces that welcomed me in the pit. And so I woke cold in my bed: but it still seemed that I lay indeed at last among those who shall be my mates for ever, and could feel the apple still in my hand.

THE DOOM OF THE SIRENS

A LYRICAL TRAGEDY

ACT I.—SCENE I

HERMITAGE near the Siren's Rock. A Christianized Prince, flying from persecution in the latter days of the Roman Empire, is driven that way by stress of weather (having with him his wife and infant child), and succeeds in taking refuge in the Hermitage. The Hermit relates to him the legend of the Sirens, and how they are among the Pagan powers not yet subdued but still acting as demons against the human race. The spell upon them is that their power cannot be destroyed until one of them shall yield to human love and become enamoured of some one among her intended victims. The Hermit has, therefore, established himself hard by to pray for travellers in danger, and, if possible, to warn them off in time, and he implores the Prince to pursue his voyage by some other course. The Prince, however, says that he shall not be able to do so, and trusts in Heaven and in his love for his wife to guard him against danger. He dwells on his being a Christian, and therefore beyond the power of Pagan demons, who had as yet destroyed only those unprotected by true faith. The storm having subsided (this scene occurs the morning after he had taken refuge), the Prince and his family re-embark, leaving the Hermit praying for their safety.

SCENE 2

The ship arrives at the Sirens' Rock, amid the songs of the three Sirens, Thelxiope, Thelxinoe, and Ligeia. The first offers wealth, the second greatness and triumph over his enemies, the third (Ligeia) offers her love. Here a chorus in which the three contend and the wife strives against them. The Prince gradually, in spite of his efforts, succumbs to Ligeia and climbs the rock, his wife following him. Here the choral contention is continued, the Prince clinging to Ligeia, rapt by her spells into the belief that it is the time of his first love and that he is surrounded by the scenes of that time. At last he dies in her arms, as she sings, under her poisonous breath, calling her as he dies by his wife's name, and shrinking from his wife without recognition. The Queen makes a prayer begging God to make him know her. During this he dies, and Ligeia then says,

"He knows us now; woman, take back your dead!"

The Queen pronounces a despairing curse against Ligeia, praying that she may yet love and be hated and so destroy herself and her sisters. The Queen then flings herself in madness from the rock into the sea.

SCENE 3

The Hermit puts out in a boat to where the Prince's ship is still lying, and takes the infant to his Hermitage. He soliloquizes over him, saying how, if the faith prevails in his father's kingdom, he will take him in due time to occupy the throne, but how otherwise the youth shall stay with himself to serve him as an acolyte, and so escape the storms of human passion more baneful than those of the sea.

Twenty-one years elapse between Acts I. and II.

ACT II.—SCENE I

At the court of the Byzantine Prince. The courtiers are conversing about the approaching marriage of the young Prince, now come to the

throne. One of them relates particulars respecting his being brought there as a boy by the Hermit, who revealed the secret of his father's and mother's death only to a trusted counsellor, the father of the girl he is now about to marry. They also refer to the troubles of the time when the former Prince had to fly from his kingdom on account of his faith, and recall to each other the progress of events since, and the establishment of Christianity in the country, after which the young Prince was brought back by the Hermit, and seated on his father's throne. Allusions are made to various omens and portents appearing to bear on the mysterious death of the Prince's father and mother, and on the vengeance still to be taken for it.

SCENE 2

A grove, formerly sacred to an Oracle. The Prince and his betrothed meet here and speak of their love and approaching nuptials, which are to take place the next day. They are both, however, troubled by dreams they have had and which they relate to each other at length. These bear fantastically on the death of the Prince's parents, but without clearly revealing anything, though seeming to prognosticate misfortunes still unaccomplished, and a fatal issue to their love. The Prince connects these things with the events of his early boyhood, which he dimly remembers in the hermitage by the Sirens' Rock, before the Hermit brought him to his kingdom; and he confesses to his betrothed the gloomy uncertainty with which his mind is clouded. However, they try to forget all forebodings and dwell on the happiness in store for them. They sing to each other and together, but their songs seem to find an ominous burden in the echoes of the sacred grove, and they part at last, saddened in spite of themselves. The Prince goes, leaving the lady, who says that she will stay there till her maidens join her. Being left alone, she suddenly hears a voice calling her, and finds that it comes from the Oracle of the grove, whose shrine is forgotten and almost overgrown. She forces the tangled growth aside and enters the precincts.

SCENE 3

The Shrine of the Oracle. Here the Oracle speaks to her; at first in dark sentences, but at length more explicitly, as to a great task awaiting her lover, without accomplishing which he must not hope for love or peace. It speaks of the evil powers which caused his parents' death, and are doomed themselves to annihilation by the just vengeance transmitted to him. It then tells her clearly how it is the heavenly will that the Prince shall only wed if he survives the vengeance due for his parents' death, but that he had been chosen now to fulfil the doom of the Sirens, and must at once accomplish his mission. Finally the Oracle announces that its function has been so far renewed for the last time that it may be compelled to denounce its fellow powers of Paganism; but that now its voice is silent for ever. At the end of this scene the Bride's maidens come to meet her, and find her bewildered and in tears, but cannot learn the cause from her.

SCENE 4

The Bridal Chamber on the morning after the nuptials. The scene opens with a *réveillée* sung outside. The Prince and Princess are together, and he is speaking to her of his love and their future happiness; but after a time, in the midst of their endearments, he begins to perceive that she is disturbed and anxious, and presses her to tell him the cause. She at last informs him with tears of her conference with the Oracle on their last meeting in the grove. This (as she tells him) she

had not the courage to reveal to him before their wedding, as, if obeyed, it must tear him from her arms, perhaps never to return; and she had then resolved to suppress the terrible secret at any risk to herself; but on the bridal night, while she lay in his arms, the Hermit, now a saint in heaven, had appeared to her in a dream, with a wrathful aspect. He had told her how by his means the Prince had been preserved in infancy; had reproached her with her silence as to the charge she had received; and had told her that if she did not now make known to her husband the will of Heaven, some fatal mischance would soon separate them for ever. All this she now tells him with many tears and with bitter upbraidings of the cruel fate which compelled her to avoid the certain wrath threatened to him by sending him on a mission of such terrible uncertainty. Before telling all this she had consented to speak only on his promising to grant the first favour she should afterwards ask for herself; and she now tells him that this favour is the permission to accompany him on his voyage. He endeavours in vain to dissuade her from this; and at last consents to it.

ACT III.—SCENE I

The hermitage near the Sirens' Rock, as in Act I. Arrival of the Prince, accompanied by his Bride, who is prevailed on by him to remain in prayer at the hermitage while he pursues his journey to the rock. Before they part, a paper is found written, by which they learn that the Hermit had died there a year and a day before, and that he named the day of their present arrival as the one on which his hermitage would again be tenanted, and yet on which its appointed use would cease.

SCENE 2

The Sirens' Rock. The Sirens have been warned by the evil powers to whom they are tributary that this day is a signal one for them. They are uncertain whether for good or ill, but are possessed by a spirit of baneful exultation, and in their songs alternate from one to the other wild tales of their triumphs in past times and the renowned victims who have succumbed to them. As they reach the name of the Christian Prince and his wife who died by their means, a vessel comes in view, but almost before their songs have been directed towards it, they are surprised to see it make straight for the rock, and the occupant resolutely disembark and commence the ascent. As he nears them, they exchange scornful prophecies of his ruin between the pauses of their song; but gradually Ligeia, who has at first begged him of her sisters as her special prey, finds herself strangely overpowered by emotions she does not understand, and by the time he reaches the summit of the rock and stands before them, she is alternately beseeching him for his love and her sisters for his life. A long chorus here occurs: Ligeia yielding to the agony of her passion, while the Prince repulses and reviles her, and the other Sirens wail and curse, warning her of the impending doom. The Prince tells Ligeia of his parentage and mission, but she still madly craves for his love, and holds forth to him such promises of infernal sovereignty as her gods afford, if he will yield to her passion. He, meanwhile, though proof against her lures and loathing her in his heart, is physically absorbed into the death-agony of the expiring spell; and when, at his last word of reprobation, the curse seizes her and her sisters, and they dash themselves headlong from the rock, he also succumbs to the doom, calling with his last breath on his Bride to come to him. Throughout the scene the prayers of the Bride are fitfully wafted from the hermitage between the pauses of the Sirens' songs and the deadly chorus of love and hate.

SCENE 3.

Within the hermitage, the Bride still praying. The scene to commence with a few lines of prayer, after which the Spirit of the Prince appears, calling the Bride to come to him, in the same words with which the last scene ended. She then discourses to him, saying many things in gradually increasing ecstasy of love, he all the time speaking to her at intervals, only the same words as before. She ends by answering him in his own words, calling him to come to her, and so dies.

In case of representation—supposing the hermitage and rock to be visible on the stage at the same time—the conclusion might be that at the moment of the Prince's death, when he calls to his Bride, she breaks off her prayers; answering him in the same words, and dies. Scene 3 would thus be dispensed with.

WALTER H. DEVERELL—A RAFFLE

It is projected to set on foot a raffle for the two following pictures by the late Walter H. Deverell,—viz.:

1. The Banishment of Hamlet.
2. Irish Beggars by the Roadside.

The death of this artist occurred sixteen years ago at the age of about twenty-five, and the promise he displayed remained unaccomplished. His works are the expression of original gifts struggling with difficulties and not yet brought to maturity; but they have a true interest for those who can discern mental qualities in art, contributing as they do to illustrate the growth of English poetic painting in the circle of men among whom he worked, many of whom, more fortunate in longer life, have now arrived at eminence.

These two pictures display Deverell's qualities, especially the *Hamlet*, a work which, when exhibited, met with appreciation for its colour and dramatic expression.

The present raffle has for its important object the assistance of the late artist's sister, to whom the pictures belong, and who is in such straitened circumstances as to be compelled to make this effort through her friends to obtain, by parting with them, the aid of which she stands greatly in need.

The shares in the raffle to be a guinea each; the holder of the first and second prizes will obtain respectively the pictures of *Hamlet* and the *Irish Beggars*.

The drawing will take place three months from the present date, when the subscribers will receive notice of the precise day and plan.

SILENCE

FOR A DESIGN

SHE has in one hand the fruit of peach, by which the ancients symbolized Silence—the fruit being held to resemble the human heart, and the leaf the human tongue. With the other hand she keeps closed the opening of a veil suspended in her shrine.

EBENEZER JONES

(FROM NOTES AND QUERIES, 1870)

I HOPE Mr. Gledstones-Waugh may receive from other sources a more complete account than I can give of this remarkable poet, who affords nearly the most striking instance of neglected genius in our modern school of poetry. This is a more important fact about him than his being a Chartist, which however he was, at any rate for a time.

I met him only once in my life, I believe in 1848, at which time he was about thirty, and would hardly talk on any subject but Chartism. His poems (the *Studies of Sensation and Event*) had been published some five years before my meeting him, and are full of vivid disorderly power. I was little more than a lad at the time I first chanced on them, but they struck me greatly, though I was not blind to their glaring defects and even to the ludicrous side of their wilful "newness"; attempting, as they do, to deal recklessly with those almost inaccessible combinations in nature and feeling which only intense and oft-renewed effort may perhaps at last approach. For all this, these *Studies* should be, and one day will be, disinterred from the heaps of verse deservedly buried.

Some years after meeting Jones, I was much pleased to hear the great poet Robert Browning speak in warm terms of the merit of his work; and I have understood that Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton) admired the *Studies*, and interested himself on their author's behalf. The only other recognition of this poet which I have observed is the appearance of a short but admirable lyric by him in the collection called *Nightingale Valley*, edited by William Allingham. I believe that some of Jones's unpublished MSS. are still in the possession of his friend Mr. W. J. Linton, the eminent wood-engraver, now residing in New York, who could no doubt furnish more facts about him than any one else. It is fully time that attention should be called to this poet's name, which is a noteworthy one.

It may not be out of place to mention here a much earlier and still more striking instance of poetic genius which has hitherto failed of due recognition. I allude to Charles J. Wells, the author of the blank verse scriptural drama of *Joseph and his Brethren*, published under the pseudonym of "Howard" in 1824, and of *Stories after Nature* (in prose, but of a highly poetic cast), published anonymously in 1822. This poet was a friend of Keats, who addressed to him one of the sonnets to be found in his works—"On receiving a present of roses." Wells's writings—youthful as they are—deserve to stand beside any poetry, even of that time, for original genius, and, I may add, for native structural power, though in this latter respect they bear marks of haste and neglect. Their time will come yet.

SUBJECTS FOR PICTURES

FOR FORTUNA.—A wheel, with a peacock and a raven seated on it.

Subject.—"Di donne io vidi una gentile schiera:" treated something like *The Beloved*, with Love in the foreground.

Subject.—Fair Rosamond fastening skein to branch of tree.

Subject.—Pietra degli Scrovigni seated on a stone, holding glass globe reflecting fertile hilly landscape.

"Chè non la muove se non come pietra
Lo dolce tempo che riscalda i colli."

MANDETTA, of Thoulouse, "sweetly kirtled and enlaced," with Love in an architectural background, the Daurade, and Giovanna weeping on the other side. Or, Giovanna and Mandetta together, developing the likeness. (Guido Cavalcanti.)

For the "Era in pensier" subject.—The two ladies to be very uniform in action. The well and figures to be more at one side of the picture, and the rest occupying a clearer space as large in size as possible. The Church of the Daurade to be the background—ladies

issuing from the porch, among them Mandetta; to whom Love, draped, should be introduced by another lady, and offer her the ballad on his knees. Other ladies in galleries, etc.

For DANTE (to match BEATRICE).—Background, Love in black; and Beatrice in white walking away, back view.

VENUS surrounded by mirrors, reflecting her in different views.

HYMEN and CUPID.—Door of marriage-chamber hung with garlands. Hymen standing sentinel, and preventing Cupid from peeping in at keyhole.

Subject.—Last scene in *The Cruel Sister*. The Spirit standing by the Harper, with her hands on the harp which plays alone, and looking at the Lover, or the Sister. All the personages watching the harp in astonishment without seeing the Spirit; except the Cruel Sister, who sits upright looking at her.

THE CUP OF WATER

THE young King of a country is hunting on a day with a young Knight, his friend; when, feeling thirsty, he stops at a Forester's cottage, and the Forester's daughter brings him a cup of water to drink. Both of them are equally enamoured at once of her unequalled beauty. The King, however, has been affianced from boyhood to a Princess, worthy of all love, and whom he has always believed he loved until undeceived by his new absorbing passion; but the Knight, resolved to sacrifice all other considerations to his love, goes again to the Forester's cottage and asks his daughter's hand. He finds that the girl has fixed her thoughts on the King, whose rank she does not know. On hearing it she tells her suitor humbly that she must die if such be her fate, but cannot love another. The Knight goes to the King to tell him all and beg his help; and the two friends then come to an explanation. Ultimately the King goes to the girl and pleads his friend's cause, not disguising his own passion, but saying that as he sacrifices himself to honour, so should she, at his prayer, accept a noble man whom he loves better than all men and whom she will love too. This she does at last; and the King makes his friend an Earl and gives him a grant of the forest and surrounding country as a marriage gift, with the annexed condition, that the Earl's wife shall bring the King a cup of water at the same spot on every anniversary of their first meeting when he rides a-hunting with her husband. At no other time will he see her, loving her too much. He weds the Princess, and thus two years pass, the condition being always fulfilled. But before the third anniversary the lady dies in childbirth, leaving a daughter. The King's life wears on, and still he and his friend pursue their practice of hunting on that day, for sixteen years. When the anniversary comes round for the sixteenth time since the lady's death, the Earl tells his daughter, who has grown to her mother's perfect likeness (but whom the King has never seen), to meet them on the old spot with the cup of water, as her mother first did when of the same age. The King, on seeing her, is deeply moved; but on her being presented to him by the Earl, he is about to take the cup from her hand, when he is aware of a second figure in her exact likeness, but dressed in peasant's clothes, who steps to her side as he bends from his horse to take the cup, looks in his face with solemn words of love and welcome, and kisses him on the mouth. He falls forward on his horse's neck, and is lifted up dead.

MICHAEL SCOTT'S WOOING

MICHAEL SCOTT and a friend, both young and dissolute, are returning from a carouse, by moonlight, along a wild sea-coast during a groundswell. As they come within view of a small house on the rocky shore, his companion taunts Michael Scott as to his known passion for the maiden Janet who dwells there with her father, and as to the failure of the snares he has laid for her. Scott is goaded to great irritation, and as they near the point of the sands overlooked by the cottage, he turns round on his friend and declares that the maiden shall come out to him then and there at his summons. The friend still taunts and banters him, saying that wine has heated his brain; but Scott stands quite still, muttering, and regarding the cottage with a gesture of command. After he has done so for some time, the door opens softly, and Janet comes running down the rock. As she approaches, she nearly rushes into Michael Scott's arms, but instead, swerves aside, runs swiftly by him, and plunges into the surging waves. With a shriek Michael plunges after her, and strikes out this side and that, and lashes his way among the billows, between the rising and sinking breakers; but all in vain, no sign appears of her. After some time spent in this way he returns almost exhausted to the sands, and passing without answer by his appalled and questioning friend, he climbs the rock to the door of the cottage, which is now closed. Janet's father answers his loud knocking, and to him he says, "Slay me, for your daughter has drowned herself this hour in yonder sea, and by my means." The father at first suspects some stratagem, but finally deems him mad, and says, "You rave,—my daughter is at rest in her bed." "Go seek her there," answers Michael Scott. The father goes up to his daughter's chamber, and returning very pale, signs to Michael to follow him. Together they climb the stair, and find Janet half lying and half kneeling, turned violently round, as if, in the act of rising from her bed, she had again thrown herself backward and clasped the feet of a crucifix at her bed-head; so she lies dead. Michael Scott rushes from the house, and returning maddened to the seashore, is with difficulty restrained from suicide by his friend. At last he stands like stone for a while, and then, as if repeating an inner whisper, he describes the maiden's last struggle with her heart. He says how she loved him but would not sin; how hearing in her sleep his appeal from the shore she almost yielded, and the embodied image of her longing came rushing out to him; but how in the last instant she turned back for refuge to Christ, and her soul was wrung from her by the struggle of her heart. "And as I speak," he says, "the fiend who whispers this concerning her says also in my ear how surely I am lost."

THE PALIMPSEST

(SUBJECT FOR TALE OR HUMOROUS POEM)

THE jealousies of two rival Scholars, a classical and a theological one, respecting a palimpsest. The classical one takes years to decipher his Pagan author, while the Theologian considers the only value of the scroll to consist in the Early Father on the surface, whom he is to edit in due course. The Theologian is in bad health, and expects to die before the Classic has finished. This drives him to desperation, and impels him at last to murder his rival; who in dying shows him in triumph the scroll, from which the Early Father has been completely erased by acids, leaving a fair MS. of the Pagan poet.

THE PHILTRE

A WOMAN, intensely enamoured of a man who does not love her, makes use of a philtre to secure his love. In this she succeeds ; but it also acts gradually upon his life. She attempts to avert this by destroying the whole effect of the philtre, but finds this is not permitted her ; and he dies in her arms, deeply loving her and deeply loved by her, while she is conscious of being the cause of his death. As he yields his last breath in a kiss, she knows that his spirit now hates her.

THE STEALTHY SCHOOL OF CRITICISM

(FROM THE ATHENÆUM, 1871)

YOUR paragraph, a fortnight ago, relating to the pseudonymous authorship of an article, violently assailing myself and other writers of poetry, in the *Contemporary Review* for October last, reveals a species of critical masquerade which I have expressed in the heading given to this letter. Since then, Mr. Sidney Colvin's note, qualifying the report that he intends to "answer" that article, has appeared in your pages ; and my own view as to the absolute forfeit, under such conditions, of all claim to honourable reply, is precisely the same as Mr. Colvin's. For here a critical organ, professedly adopting the principle of open signature, would seem, in reality, to assert (by silent practice, however, not by enunciation,) that if the anonymous in criticism was—as itself originally inculcated—but an early caterpillar stage, the nominate too is found to be no better than a homely transitional chrysalis, and that the ultimate butterfly form for a critic who likes to sport in sunlight and yet to elude the grasp, is after all the pseudonymous. But, indeed, what I may call the "Siamese" aspect of the entertainment provided by the *Review* will elicit but one verdict. Yet I may, perhaps, as the individual chiefly attacked, be excused for asking your assistance now in giving a specific denial to specific charges which, if unrefuted, may still continue, in spite of their author's strategic *fiasco*, to serve his purpose against me to some extent.

The primary accusation, on which this writer grounds all the rest, seems to be that others and myself "extol fleshliness as the distinct and supreme end of poetic and pictorial art ; aver that poetic expression is greater than poetic thought ; and, by inference, that the body is greater than the soul, and sound superior to sense."

As my own writings are alone formally dealt with in the article, I shall confine my answer to myself ; and this must first take unavoidably the form of a challenge to prove so broad a statement. It is true, some fragmentary pretence at proof is put in here and there throughout the attack, and thus far an opportunity is given of contesting the assertion.

A Sonnet entitled *Nuptial Sleep* is quoted and abused at page 338 of the *Review*, and is there dwelt upon as a "whole poem," describing "merely animal sensations." It is no more a whole poem, in reality, than is any single stanza of any poem throughout the book. The poem, written chiefly in sonnets, and of which this is one sonnet-stanza, is entitled *The House of Life* ; and even in my first published instalment of the whole work (as contained in the volume under notice) ample evidence is included that no such passing phase of description as the one headed *Nuptial Sleep* could possibly be put forward by the author of *The House of Life* as his own representative view of the subject of love. In proof of this, I will direct attention (among the love-sonnets of this poem) to Nos. 2, 8, 11, 17, 28, and more especially 13, which, indeed, I had better print here.

LOVE-SWEETNESS

"Sweet dimness of her loosened hair's downfall
 About thy face; her sweet hands round thy head
 In gracious fostering union garlanded;
 Her tremulous smiles; her glances' sweet recall
 Of love; her murmuring sighs memorial;
 Her mouth's culled sweetness by thy kisses shed
 On cheeks and neck and eyelids, and so led
 Back to her mouth which answers there for all:—

"What sweeter than these things, except the thing
 In lacking which all these would lose their sweet:—
 The confident heart's still fervour; the swift beat
 And soft subsidence of the spirit's wing
 Then when it feels, in cloud-girt wayfaring,
 The breath of kindred plumes against its feet?"

Any reader may bring any artistic charge he pleases against the above sonnet; but one charge it would be impossible to maintain against the writer of the series in which it occurs, and that is, the wish on his part to assert that the body is greater than the soul. For here all the passionate and just delights of the body are declared—somewhat figuratively, it is true, but unmistakably—to be as naught if not ennobled by the concurrence of the soul at all times. Moreover, nearly one half of this series of sonnets has nothing to do with love, but treats of quite other life-influences. I would defy any one to couple with fair quotation of Sonnets 29, 30, 31, 39, 40, 41, 43, or others, the slander that their author was not impressed, like all other thinking men, with the responsibilities and higher mysteries of life; while Sonnets 35, 36, and 37, entitled *The Choice*, sum up the general view taken in a manner only to be evaded by conscious insincerity. Thus much for *The House of Life*, of which the sonnet *Nuptial Sleep* is one stanza, embodying, for its small constituent share, a beauty of natural universal function, only to be reprobated in art if dwelt on (as I have shown that it is not here) to the exclusion of those other highest things of which it is the harmonious concomitant.

At page 342, an attempt is made to stigmatize four short quotations as being specially "my own property," that is, (for the context shows the meaning,) as being grossly sensual; though all guiding reference to any precise page or poem in my book is avoided here. The first of these unspecified quotations is from the *Last Confession*; and is the description referring to the harlot's laugh, the hideous character of which, together with its real or imagined resemblance to the laugh heard soon afterwards from the lips of one long cherished as an ideal, is the immediate cause which makes the maddened hero of the poem a murderer. Assailants may say what they please; but no poet or poetic reader will blame me for making the incident recorded in these seven lines as repulsive to the reader as it was to the hearer and beholder. Without this, the chain of motive and result would remain obviously incomplete. Observe also that these are but seven lines in a poem of some five hundred, not one other of which could be classed with them.

A second quotation gives the last two lines *only* of the following sonnet, which is the first of four sonnets in *The House of Life* jointly entitled *Willowwood*:—

"I sat with Love upon a woodside well,
 Leaning across the water, I and he;
 Nor ever did he speak nor looked at me,
 But touched his lute wherein was audible
 The certain secret thing he had to tell:
 Only our mirrored eyes met silently
 In the low wave; and that sound seemed to be
 The passionate voice I knew; and my tears fell.

"And at their fall, his eyes beneath grew hers;
 And with his foot and with his wing-feathers
 He swept the spring that watered my heart's drouth.
 Then the dark ripples spread to waving hair,
 And as I stooped, her own lips rising there
 Bubbled with brimming kisses at my mouth."

The critic has quoted (as I said) only the last two lines, and he has italicized the second as something unbearable and ridiculous. Of course the inference would be that this was really my own absurd bubble-and-squeak notion of an actual kiss. The reader will perceive at once, from the whole sonnet transcribed above, how untrue such an inference would be. The sonnet describes a dream or trance of divided love momentarily re-united by the longing fancy; and in the imagery of the dream, the face of the beloved rises through deep dark waters to kiss the lover. Thus the phrase, "Bubbled with brimming kisses," etc., bears purely on the special symbolism employed, and from that point of view will be found, I believe, perfectly simple and just.

A third quotation is from *Eden Bower*, and says,

"What more prize than love to impel thee?
 Grip and lip my limbs as I tell thee!"

Here again no reference is given, and naturally the reader would suppose that a human embrace is described. The embrace, on the contrary, is that of a fabled snake-woman and a snake. It would be possible still, no doubt, to object on other grounds to this conception; but the ground inferred and relied on for full effect by the critic is none the less an absolute misrepresentation. These three extracts, it will be admitted, are virtually, though not verbally, garbled with malicious intention; and the same is the case, as I have shown, with the sonnet called *Nuptial Sleep* when purposely treated as a "whole poem."

The last of the four quotations grouped by the critic as conclusive examples consists of two lines from *Jenny*. Neither some thirteen years ago, when I wrote this poem, nor last year when I published it, did I fail to foresee impending charges of recklessness and aggressiveness, or to perceive that even some among those who could really read the poem, and acquit me on these grounds, might still hold that the thought in it had better have dispensed with the situation which serves it for framework. Nor did I omit to consider how far a treatment from without might here be possible. But the motive powers of art reverse the requirement of science, and demand first of all an *inner* standing-point. The heart of such a mystery as this must be plucked from the very world in which it beats or bleeds; and the beauty and pity, the self-questionings and all-questionings which it brings with it, can come with full force only from the mouth of one alive to its whole appeal, such as the speaker put forward in the poem,—that is, of a young and thoughtful man of the world. To such a speaker, many half-cynical revulsions of feeling and reverie, and a recurrent presence of the impressions of beauty (however artificial) which first brought him within such a circle of influence, would be inevitable features of the dramatic relations portrayed. Here again I can give the lie, in hearing of honest readers, to the base or trivial ideas which my critic labours to connect with the poem. There is another little charge, however, which this minstrel in mufti brings against *Jenny*, namely, one of plagiarism from that very poetic self of his which the tutelary prose does but enshroud for the moment. This question can, fortunately, be settled with ease by others who have read my critic's poems; and thus I need the less regret that,

not happening myself to be in that position, I must be content to rank with those who cannot pretend to an opinion on the subject.

It would be humiliating, need one come to serious detail, to have to refute such an accusation as that of "binding oneself by solemn league and covenant to extol fleshliness as the distinct and supreme end of poetic and pictorial art"; and one cannot but feel that here every one will think it allowable merely to pass by with a smile the foolish fellow who has brought a charge thus framed against any reasonable man. Indeed, what I have said already is substantially enough to refute it, even did I not feel sure that a fair balance of my poetry must, of itself, do so in the eyes of every candid reader. I say nothing of my pictures; but those who know them will laugh at the idea. That I may, nevertheless, take a wider view than some poets or critics, of how much, in the material conditions absolutely given to man to deal with as distinct from his spiritual aspirations, is admissible within the limits of Art,—this, I say, is possible enough; nor do I wish to shrink from such responsibility. But to state that I do so to the ignoring or overshadowing of spiritual beauty, is an absolute falsehood, impossible to be put forward except in the indulgence of prejudice or rancour.

I have selected, amid much railing on my critic's part, what seemed the most representative indictment against me, and have, so far, answered it. Its remaining clauses set forth how others and myself "aver that poetic expression is greater than poetic thought . . . and sound superior to sense"—an accusation elsewhere, I observe, expressed by saying that we "wish to create form for its own sake." If writers of verse are to be listened to in such arraignment of each other, it might be quite competent to me to prove, from the works of my friends in question, that no such thing is the case with them; but my present function is to confine myself to my own defence. This, again, it is difficult to do quite seriously. It is no part of my undertaking to dispute the verdict of any "contemporary," however contemptuous or contemptible, on my own measure of executive success; but the accusation cited above is not against the poetic value of certain work, but against its primary and (by assumption) its admitted aim. And to this I must reply that so far, assuredly, not even Shakspeare himself could desire more arduous human tragedy for development in Art than belongs to the themes I venture to embody, however incalculably higher might be his power of dealing with them. What more inspiring for poetic effort than the terrible Love turned to Hate,—perhaps the deadliest of all passion-woven complexities,—which is the theme of *Sister Helen*, and, in a more fantastic form, of *Eden Bower*—the surroundings of both poems being the mere machinery of a central universal meaning? What, again, more so than the savage penalty exacted for a lost ideal, as expressed in the *Last Confession*;—than the outraged love for man and burning compensations in art and memory of *Dante at Verona*;—than the baffling problems which the face of *Jenny* conjures up;—or than the analysis of passion and feeling attempted in *The House of Life*, and others among the more purely lyrical poems? I speak here, as does my critic in the clause adduced, of *aim*, not of *achievement*; and so far, the mere summary is instantly subversive of the preposterous imputation. To assert that the poet whose matter is such as this aims chiefly at "creating form for its own sake," is, in fact, almost an ingenuous kind of dishonesty; for surely it delivers up the asserter at once, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of contradictory proof. Yet this may fairly be taken as an example of the spirit in which a constant effort is here made against me to appeal to those who either are ignorant of what I write, or else belong to the large class too easily influenced by an assumption of authority in addressing them. The false name appended to the article must,

as is evident, aid this position vastly; for who, after all, would not be apt to laugh at seeing one poet confessedly come forward as aggressor against another in the field of criticism?

It would not be worth while to lose time and patience in noticing minutely how the system of misrepresentation is carried into points of artistic detail,—giving us, for example, such statements as that the burthen employed in the ballad of *Sister Helen* “is repeated with little or no alteration through thirty-four verses,” whereas the fact is, that the alteration of it in every verse is the very scheme of the poem. But these are minor matters quite thrown into the shade by the critic’s more daring sallies. In addition to the class of attack I have answered above, the article contains, of course, an immense amount of personal paltriness; as, for instance, attributions of my work to this, that, or the other absurd derivative source; or again, pure nonsense (which can have no real meaning even to the writer) about “one art getting hold of another, and imposing on it its conditions and limitations”; or, indeed, what not besides? However, to such antics as this, no more attention is possible than that which Virgil enjoined Dante to bestow on the meaner phenomena of his pilgrimage.

Thus far, then, let me thank you for the opportunity afforded me to join issue with the Stealthy School of Criticism. As for any literary justice to be done on this particular Mr. Robert-Thomas, I will merely ask the reader whether, once identified, he does not become manifestly his own best “sworn tormentor”? For who will then fail to discern all the palpitations which preceded his final resolve in the great question whether to be or not to be his acknowledged self when he became an assailant? And yet this is he who, from behind his mask, ventures to charge another with “bad blood,” with “insincerity,” and the rest of it (and that where poetic fancies are alone in question); while every word on his own tongue is covert rancour, and every stroke from his pen perversion of truth. Yet, after all, there is nothing wonderful in the lengths to which a fretful poet-critic will carry such grudges as he may bear, while publisher and editor can both be found who are willing to consider such means admissible, even to the clear subversion of first professed tenets in the *Review* which they conduct.

In many phases of outward nature, the principle of chaff and grain holds good,—the base enveloping the precious continually; but an untruth was never yet the husk of a truth. Thresh and riddle and winnow it as you may,—let it fly in shreds to the four winds,—falsehood only will be that which flies and that which stays. And thus the sheath of deceit which this pseudonymous undertaking presents at the outset insures in fact what will be found to be its real character to the core.

HAKE’S MADELINE, AND OTHER POEMS

ABOVE all ideal personalities with which the poet must learn to identify himself, there is one supremely real which is the most imperative of all; namely, that of his reader. And the practical watchfulness needed for such assimilation is as much a gift and instinct as is the creative grasp of alien character. It is a spiritual contact, hardly conscious yet ever renewed, and which must be a part of the very act of production. Among the greatest English singers of the past, perhaps four only have possessed this assimilative power in pure perfection. These are Chaucer, Shakspeare, Byron, and Burns; and to their names the world may probably add in the future that of William Morris.

We have no thought of saying that not to belong to this circle,

widest in range and narrowest in numbers, is to be but half a poet. It is with the poetic glory as with the planetary ones; this too has satellites called into being by the law of its own creation. Not every soul specially attuned to song is itself a singer; but the productive and the receptive poetic mind are members of one constellation; and it may be safely asserted that to take rank in the exceptional order of those born with perfect though passive song-perception is to be even further removed from the "general reader" on the one hand than from the producer of poetry on the other.

But some degree, entire or restricted, of relation to the outer audience, must be the test of every poet's vocation, and has to be considered first of all in criticizing his work. The book under notice has perhaps as limited a reach of appeal as can well be imagined, and the writer's faculty of *rapproch* seems on the whole imperfect; yet there are qualities in what he has written which no true poetic reader can regard with indifference.

The best and most sympathetic part of Dr. Hake's volume is decidedly its central division—the one headed *Parables*. Had one poem of this section, quaintly called *Old Souls*, come first in the book, the favourable impression on opening it must have been immediate and conclusive. The poem is a symbolic expression of the humility of Christ in His personal ministering to man's needs and renewal of fallen humanity; and the subject is carried out with great completeness as regards the contrast between Christ Himself and His earthly representatives, His relation to all classes of men, and the deliberate simplicity of His beneficent labour in the soul. The form of expression adopted in this poem is of the highest order of homely pathos, to which no common word comes amiss, and yet in which the sense of reverence and appropriateness is everywhere perfect. The piece is so high in theme, and so utterly good of its class, that we shall not attempt to extract from it, as its unity of purpose and execution throughout is the leading quality without which no idea of its merit can be conveyed.

Two others among the four *Parables*,—*The Lily of the Valley* and *The Deadly Nightshade*—though somewhat less perfect successes than this, rival it in essential value. They are contrasted pictures; the first, of poverty surrounded by natural influences and the compensations of universal endowment; the other, of poverty surrounded in the life of cities by social rejection only, and endlessly instigated to snatch some share of good by the reiterated scoff, "This is not for thee." In the first poem a young forest-bred girl, in the second a boy reared in the fetid life of courts and alleys, is the medium through which the lesson is developed. Here, again, we are at some loss to express the poems by extract; but with this proviso we may take from the *Lily of the Valley* a few sweet stanzas of simple description:—

"The wood is what it was of old,
A timber-farm where wild flowers grow:
There woodman's axe is never cold,
And lays the oaks and beeches low:
But though the hand of man deface,
The lily ever grows in grace.

"Of their sweet loving natures proud,
The stock-doves sojourn in the tree:
With breasts of feathered sky and cloud,
And notes of soft though tuneless glee,
Hid in the leaves they take a spring,
And crush the stillness with their wing.

"The wood to her was the old wood,
The same as in her father's time;
Nor with their sooths and sayings good
The dead told of its youth or prime.
The hollow trunks were hollow then,
And honoured like the bones of men."

This simple story of parable has great beauties, especially at the point where the first acquaintance with death among those she loved causes the child to wander forth bewildered, and at last, weary and asleep in the wood, to find the images of terror and decay hitherto overlooked in nature assume prominence for the first time in her dreams. This is very subtle and lovely; but it must be added that even this poem, which is among the least difficult in the book, needs some re-reading before it is mastered, and leaves an impression—if not of artificiality, to which the author's mind is evidently superior—yet of a singular native tendency to embody all conceptions through a remote and reticent medium. This, however, is much less apparent in the *Deadly Nightshade*, which approaches *Old Souls* in clearness and mastery, though not essentially finer than its companion poem, the *Lily*. The description here of the poor beggar-boy's drunken mother is in a vein of true realistic tragedy; and the dire directness of treatment is carried on throughout:—

- “ Then did he long for once to taste
The reeking viands, as their smell
From cellar-gratings ran to waste
In gusts that sicken and repel.
Like Beauty with a rose regaled,
The grateful vapours he inhaled.
- “ So oft a-hungred has he stood
And yarn of fasting fancy spun,
As wistfully he watched the food
With one foot out away to run,
Lest questioned be his only right
To revel in the goodly sight.
- “ Lest justice should detect within
A blot no human eye could see,
He dragged his rags about his skin
To hide from view his pedigree:
He deemed himself a thief by law,
Who stole ere yet the light he saw.
- “ His theft, the infancy of crime,
Was but a sombre glance to steal,
While outside shops he spent his time
In vain imaginings to deal,
With looks of awe to speculate
On all things good, while others ate.
- “ No better school his eyes to guide,
He lingers by some savoury mass,
And watches mouths that open wide,
And sees them eating through the glass:
Oft his own lips he opes and shuts,—
With sympathy his fancy gluts.
- “ Yet he begs not, but in a trance
Admires the scene where numbers throng;
And if on him descends a glance,
He is abashed and slinks along;
Nor cares he more, the spell once broke,
Scenes of false plenty to invoke.”

The fourth *Parable*, called *Immortality*, deals with the course of an elevated soul in which thwarted ambition is tempered by resignation, and which looks into the future of eternity for free scope and for a reversed relation between itself and antagonistic natures. This, however, is somewhat obscurely rendered, and must be pronounced inferior to the other three. Of these three, we may say that, if they are read first in the book, the fit reader cannot but be deeply moved by their genuine human and spiritual sympathy, and by their many beauties of expression; and will be prepared to look

thenceforward past his author's difficulties to the spirit which shines through them, with a feeling of enthusiastic confidence.

We may turn next to the last section of the volume—the series of sixty-five short poems entitled in the aggregate *The World's Epitaph*. Many of these reveal the same tender thought for human suffering which is the great charm of the *Parables*, and it is sometimes expressed with equal force and beauty. Such pre-eminently are those *On the Outcast* and *On the Saint*; the last conveying a picture which has something startlingly imaginative, of a member of the communion of saints presenting before the supreme Tribunal, as an appeal for pity, some poignant personation of the anguish endured on earth. However, here again the order of the poems seems unfortunate, the series opening with some of the weakest. Many of the “epitaphs” have appended to them an “epode,” which appears to be, generally or always, the rejoinder of the world to the poet's reflection; but perhaps these do not often add much to the force of the thing said. Such a scheme as this series presents is obviously not to be fairly discussed in a brief notice like the present; but we may note as interesting examples, in various degrees, of its plan, the epitaphs *On the Sanctuary*, *On Time*, *On the Soul*, *On the Valley of the Shadow*, *On Life*, *On the Seasons of Life*, *On the Window*, *On Early Death*, *On the Deserted*, *On Dissipated Youth*, *On the Statesman*, *On Old Age*, *On Penitence*, and *On the Struggle for Immortality*. As a specimen of this section of the book we extract the following brief poem *On the Soul*:—

“Free as the soul, the spire ascends;
Heaven lets it in her presence sit;
Yet ever back to earth it tends,—
The tranquil waters echo it.
So falls the future to the past;
So the high soul to earth is cast.

“But though the soul thus nobly fails,
Not long it borders on despair;
It still the fallen glory hails,
Though lost its conquests in the air.
While truth is yet above, its good
Is measured in the spirit's flood.

“Though not at first its holy light
Is figured in that mirror's face,
It scarce returns a form less bright
Than fills above a higher place.
The one was loved though little known,
The other is the spirits' own.”

This little piece, in spite of some uncertainty in the arrangement of its last stanza, has the dignity and ordered compass of a mind naturally empowered to deal with high things; and this is often equally evident throughout the series. Still we have to regret that even complete obscurity is a not uncommon blemish, while imperfect expression seems too often to be attributable to a neglect of means; and this despite the fact that a sense of style is certainly one of the first impressions derived from Dr. Hake's writings. But we fear that a too great and probably organic abstraction of mind interferes continually with the projection of his thoughts; and we are frequently surprised to meet, amid the excellence and fluent melody of his rhythm, with some sudden deviation from the structure of the metre employed, which can be attributable only to carelessness and want of watchful revision. It needs such practical and patent proofs as this to convince one of neglect where the instinct of structure exists so unmistakably; and it is then that we begin to perceive the cause of much that is imperfect in the author's intellectual self-expression. This is no doubt the absence of that self-examination and self-confronting with the reader which are in an absolutely unwearied degree necessary

in art; and the question only remains whether the poet's nature will or will not for the future admit of his applying at all times a rigorous remedy to this mental shortcoming.

The same difficulty meets us in excess when we come to the poem which stands first on Dr. Hake's title-page—*Madeline*. With this our remaining space is far from permitting us to deal at such length as could alone give any true idea of its involved and somewhat bewildering elements. Its unexplained form is a puzzle at the outset. It is delivered in a kind of alternating recitative between *Valclusa*, the name of the personified district in which the action is laid, and a *Chorus of Nymphs*. The argument may be summed up somewhat to this effect. Hermes, a beneficent magician and poet, has been enamoured of Daphne, who has since died and become to him a ministering spirit and his coadjutress in the hallowed exercise of his art. He has been made aware of the seduction of a young girl, Madeline, by the lord of the land, and has in vain laboured to prevent it, but now calls Daphne to his aid in consoling the outcast. This angelic spirit conveys her to the magician's home, where a sort of heavenly encampment is formed, in the midst of which Madeline lies in magic slumbers watched by her protectress. Glad and sad visions succeed each other in her sleep, varied but not broken by conference with Daphne, who urges her to forgiveness of her betrayer. But she has been chosen by a resistless power as the avenger of her own wrong; and as this ever-recurring phantom of vengeance gains gradual possession of her whole being, the angelic comforter, who has taken on herself some expiatory communion in Madeline's agony, is so wrung by the human anguish that she undergoes the last pain of humanity in a simulated death. Madeline then fulfils her destiny, and makes her way, still in a trance of sleep, by stormy mountain passes to the castle of him who had wrought her ruin; passes through his guards, finds him among his friends, and slays him. She then returns to the magic encampment, and lying down by the now unconscious Daphne, is in her turn released by death. The poem closes with the joint apotheosis of the consoler and the consoled, together with a child, the unborn fruit of Madeline's wrong.

This conception, singular enough, but neither devoid of sublimity nor of real relation to human passion and pity, is carried out with great structural labour, and forms no doubt the portion of the volume on which Dr. Hake has bestowed his most conscientious care. But our rough argument can give no idea of the baffling involutions of its treatment and diction, rendering it, we fear, quite inaccessible to most readers. The scheme of this strange poem is as literal and deliberate in a certain sense as though the story were the simplest in the world; and so far it might be supposed to fulfil one of the truest laws of the supernatural in art—that of homely externals developing by silent contrast the inner soul of the subject. But here, in fact, the outer world does not once affect us in tangible form. The effect produced is operatic or even ballet-like as regards mechanical environment and course of action. This is still capable of defence on very peculiar ideal grounds; but we fear the reader will find the sequence of the whole work much more difficult to pursue than our summary may promise.

The structure of the verse is even exceptionally grand and well combined; but the use of language, though often extremely happy, is also too frequently vague to excess; and the employment of one elaborate lyrical metre throughout a long dramatic action, only varied by occasional passages in the heroic couplet, conveys a certain sense of oppression, in spite of the often felicitous workmanship. Moreover a rigid exactness in the rhymes—without the variation of assonance so valuable or even invaluable in poetry—is apt here to be preserved at the expense of meaning and spontaneity. Never-

theless, when all is said, there can be no doubt that the same reader who at one moment lays down a poem like this in hopeless bewilderment might at another, when his mind is lighter and clearer, and he is at a happier juncture of *rapport* with its author, take it up to much more luminous and pleasurable results, and find it really impressive. One point which should not be overlooked in reading it is, that there is an evident intention on Dr. Hake's part to make hysterical and even mesmeric phenomena in some degree the groundwork of his conception. The fitness of these for poetry, particularly when thus minutely dealt with, may indeed afford matter for argument, but the intention must not be lost sight of. Lastly, to deny to *Madeline* a decided element of ideal beauty, however unusually presented, would be to demonstrate entire unfitness for judgment on the work.

We have left ourselves no room to extract from *Madeline* in any representative way; but the following two stanzas (the second of them extremely fine) may serve to give an idea of the metre in which it is written, and afford some glimpse of its uniquely fantastic elaboration. The passage is from the very heart of the poem: where *Madeline* is overshadowed in sleep by the vision of her seducer's castle, rousing half-formed horror and resolve; till all things, even to the drapery which clothes her body, seem to take part in the direful overmastering hour.

"The robe that round her flows
Is stirred like drifted snows;
Its restless waves her marble figure drape,
And all its charms express,
In ever-changing shape,
To zephyrs that caress
Her limbs, and lay them bare,
And all their grace and loveliness declare.
Nor modesty itself could chide
The soft enchanters as they past her breathe
And beauty wreath
In rippling forms that ever onward glide.

"Breezes from yonder tower,
Loosed by the avenging power,
Her senses hurry and a dread impart.
In terror she beholds
Her fluttering raiment start
In ribbed and bristled folds.
Its texture close and fine
With broidery sweeps the bosom's heaving line,
Then trickles down as from a wound,
Curdling across the heart as past it steals,
Where it congeals
In horrid clots her quivering waist around."

We have purposely avoided hitherto any detailed allusion to what appear to us grave verbal defects of style in these poems; nor shall we cite such instances at all, as things of this kind, detached from their context, produce often an exaggeratedly objectionable impression. Suffice it to say that, for a writer who displays an undoubted command over true dignity of language, Dr. Hake permits himself at times the most extraordinarily conventional (or once conventional) use of Della-Cruscan phrases, that could be found in any poet since the wonderful days when Hayley wrote the *Triumphs of Temper*. And this leads us to a few final words on his position as a living writer.

It appears to us then that Dr. Hake is, in relation to his own time, as original a poet as one can well conceive possible. He is uninfluenced by any styles or mannerisms of the day to so absolute a degree as to tempt one to believe that the latest English singer he may have even heard of is Wordsworth; while in some respects his ideas and points of view are newer than the newest in vogue; and the external affinity frequently traceable to elder poets only throws this essential independence into startling and at times almost whimsical relief.

His style, at its most characteristic pitch, is a combination of extreme homeliness, as of Quarles or Bunyan, with a formality and even occasional courtliness of diction which recall Pope himself in his most artificial flights; while one is frequently reminded of Gray by sustained vigour of declamation. This is leaving out of the question the direct reference to classical models which is perhaps in reality the chief source of what this poet has in common with the eighteenth century writers. The resemblance sometimes apparent to Wordsworth may be more on the surface than the influences named above; while one might often suppose that the spiritual tenderness of Blake had found in our author a worthy disciple, did not one think it most probable that Blake lay out of his path of study. With all his peculiarities, and all the obstacles which really stand between him and the reading public, he will not fail to be welcomed by certain readers for his manly human heart, and genuine if not fully subjugated powers of hand.

MACLISE'S CHARACTER-PORTRAITS

THERE is much in the function of criticism which absolutely needs time for its final and irreversible settlement. And indeed some systematic reference to past things, now at length presenting clearer grounds for decision, seems a not undesirable section in any critical journal, which finds itself necessarily at the constant disadvantage of determining the exact nature of all grain as it passes with dazzling and illusive rapidity through the sieve of the present hour. Thus it might be well if a certain amount of space were willingly granted, in such journals, to those who, in the course of their own pursuits, find something special to say on bygone work, perhaps half if not wholly forgotten, yet which, for all that, may have in it a vitality well able to second any reviving effort when that is once bestowed.

MacLise stands, it is true, in no danger of oblivion; though he has lately passed away from among us with infinitely less public recognition and regret than has been bestowed, and that in recent cases, on painters infinitely less than he. His was a force of central fire whose conscious abundance descends at will on many altars, and has something to spare even for *feux d'artifice*; and it is fortunate that, after the production of much which, with all its vigour and variety, failed generally to represent him in any full sense, his wilful and somewhat scornful power did at last culminate in a perfect manifestation. His two supreme works—the *Waterloo* and *Trafalgar* in the House of Lords—unite the value of almost contemporary record with that wild legendary fire and contagious heart-pulse of hero-worship which are essential for the transmission of epic events through art. These are such "historical" pictures as the world had perhaps never seen before; bold as that assertion may appear in the face of the trained and learnedly military modern art of the continent. But here a man wrought whose instincts were absolutely towards the poetic, and yet whose ideality was not independent, but required to be exercised in the service of action, and perhaps even of national feeling, to attain its full development. These two splendid monuments of his genius, thus truly directed, he has left us; and we may stand before them with the confidence that only in the field of poetry, and not of painting, can the world match them as realized chronicles of heroic beauty.

However, my desire to express some sense of MacLise's greatness at its highest point is leading me away at the outset from the immediate subject of this notice, which has to do merely with an early and subordinate, though not ephemeral, product of his powers. I allude to the long series of character-portraits—chiefly drawn on

stone with a lithographic pen, but in other instances more elaborately etched or engraved—which he contributed (under the pseudonym of “Alfred Croquis”) to *Fraser's Magazine* between the years 1830 and 1838. Some illustration of Maclise's genius, in the form of a book ready to hand, and containing characteristic work of his, would be very desirable; and I am not aware that any such exists at present. If unfortunately the original plates of these portraits have been destroyed, they are exactly such things as are best suited to reproduction by some of the photo-lithographic processes, and I cannot doubt that by this means they might be perfectly and permanently recovered and again put in circulation. I suppose no such series of the portraits of celebrated persons of any epoch, produced by an eye and hand of so much insight and power, and realized with such a view to the actual impression of the sitter, exists anywhere; and the period illustrated possessed abundant claims to a worthy personal record. Pre-eminent here, among literary celebrities, are Göthe, Walter Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Charles Lamb, and Thomas Carlyle. Each produces the impression of absolute trustworthiness, as in a photograph. The figure of Göthe alone, though very vivid as he gazes over his shoulder with encountering unreleasing eyes, is probably not derived from personal observation, but reproduced from some authority—here surpassed (as one cannot but suspect) in clear directness of rendering. The portrait of Scott, with its unflinching enjoyment of peculiarities, gives, I have no doubt, a more exact impression of the man, as equipped for his daily life, than any likeness that could be met with. The same may be said of the “Coleridge”—a mournful latter-day record of him, the image of a life subdued into darkness, yet survived by the soul within its eyes; and of the “Wordsworth,”—beneficently enthroned, as if for the distribution of some order of merit to encourage the forces of Nature; while Lamb, on the contrary, is shown to us warmly ensconced, sucking at his sweet books (and some other sweets) like a bee, and only conscious of self by the thrills of that dear delight provided. As for our still living glory, Carlyle, the picture here given of him, in the simple reserved strength of his earlier life, convinces us at once of its priceless fidelity. Fortunately this portrait is one of those most carefully modelled and engraved, and is a very beautiful complete piece of individuality. This, no doubt, like some others, is a direct portrait for which the original actually stood; while many, on the other hand, are reminiscences, either serious or satirical, of the persons represented.

It would be vain, in such space as I have at disposal, to attempt even a summary of the numerous other representatives of literature here gathered together; from the effete memorial effigy of Rogers, to Theodore Hook, jauntily yet carelessly posed, and with a twinkling, self-loving face, which is one of the special masterpieces of the collection. But I may mention, almost at random, the portraits of Godwin, Leigh Hunt, Cruikshank, Disraeli the elder, and the Arctic voyager Ross, as presenting admirable examples of the series.

To convey a correct idea of the manner of these drawings to those who have not seen them would be difficult. Both in rendering of character, whether in its first aspect or subtler shades, and in the unflinching knowledge of form which seizes at once on the movement of the body beneath the clothes and on the lines of the clothes themselves, these drawings are on an incalculably higher level than the works of even the best professional sketchers. Indeed no happier instance could well be found of the unity, for literal purposes, of what may be justly termed “style” with an incisive and relishing realism. A fine instance, though not at all an exceptional one, is the figure of the poet Campbell, leaning back in his chair for a few whiffs at his long pipe, amid the lumber of an editor's office. The

whole proportions of the vignettèd drawing are at the same time so just and fanciful, and the personage so strongly and unflinchingly planted in his place, that the eye and mind receive an equal satisfaction at the first and last glance. Kindred instances are the figures of Jerdan and Galt, both equally admirable. Of course, as in all cases of clear satisfaction in art, the gift of beauty, and no other, is at the bottom of the success achieved. I have no room to point to many instances of this, but may refer to one; namely, the rendering—whimsical, as in the spirit of the series, yet truly appreciative—of that noble beauty which in Caroline Norton inspired the best genius of her long summer day. At other times the artist allows himself to render character by playful exaggeration of the most obvious kind; as in the funnily-drawn plate of Miss Landon, where the kitten-like *mignonnerie* required is attained by an amusing excess of daintiness in the proportions, with the duly charming result nevertheless. The same may be said of the "Count D'Orsay," that sublime avatar of the eighteen-thirties, a portrait no doubt as intensely true to impression as it is impossible to fact.

I have already spoken of the literary leaders represented. Here too are the kings of slashing criticism, chiefs of that phalanx of rampant English and blatant Scotch mediocrity: insolent, indolent Maginn; Lockhart, elaborately at ease; Croker, tasteless and shameless; and Christopher North, cock of the walk, whose crowings have now long given place to much sweet singing that they often tried to drown, and who, for all his Jove-like head, cloud-capped in Scotch sentiment and humour, was but a bantam Thunderer after all. Not even piteous inferiority in their unheeded successors can make such men as these seem great to us now. There they lie—broken weeds in the furrows traced by Time's ploughshare for the harvest which they would fain have choked.

It may be doubted whether Macclise saw clearly the relative importance of all the characters he portrayed in this gathering. His instincts were chiefly those of a painter, not of a thinker; and moreover he was doubtless, as a young man then, a good deal under the influence of association with the reckless magazine-staff among whom he worked in this instance. Accordingly some of the satire conveyed by his pencil is now and then not in the best taste; though perhaps the only really strong instance of this is the laughable but impertinent portrait of Miss Martineau. Many are merely playful, as the "Siamese" version of Bulwer-Lytton at his shaving-glass; or that flush of budding oriental dandyism here on record as the first incarnation of Benjamin Disraeli.

But one picture here stands out from the rest in mental power, and ranks Macclise as a great master of tragic satire. It is that which grimly shows us the senile torpor of Talleyrand, as he sits in after-dinner sleep between the spread board and the fire-place, surveyed from the mantel-shelf by the busts of all the sovereigns he had served. His elbows are on the chair-arms; his hands hang; his knees, fallen open, reveal the waste places of shrivelled age; the book he read, as the lore he lived by, has dropped between his feet; his chap-fallen mask is spread upward as the scalp rests on the cushioned chair-back; the wick gutters in the wasting candle beside him; and his last Master claims him now. All he was is gone; and water or fire for the world after him—what care had he? The picture is more than a satire; it might be called a diagram of Damnation; a ghastly historical verdict which becomes the image of the man for ever. This is one of the few drawings which Macclise has signed with his *nom-de-crayon* at full length; and he had reason to be proud of it.

But I must bring particulars to a close, hoping that I may have roused, in such readers of the *Academy* as were hitherto unacquainted with this series, a desire to know it and an interest in its possible

reproduction. This, I may again say, seems easy to be accomplished by photolithography, though I do not know myself which of the various methods more or less to be classed under that title is the best for the purpose. The portraits should be accompanied in such case both by the original magazine-squibs necessary for explanation, and by some competent summary of real merits and relative values as time has shown them since. And before concluding, I may mention that in the Garrick Club there is a sketch of Thackeray by Maclise, in pen or pencil (I forget which), evidently meant to enter into this series. It is Thackeray at the best time of his life, and ought certainly to be facsimiled with the rest in the event of their revival.

HAKE'S PARABLES AND TALES

THE quality of finish in poetic execution is of two kinds. The first and highest is that where the work has been all mentally "cartooned," as it were, beforehand, by a process intensely conscious, but patient and silent,—an occult evolution of life: then follows the glory of wielding words, and we see the hand of Dante, as that of Michelangelo,—or almost as that quickening Hand which Michelangelo has dared to embody,—sweep from left to right, fiery and final. Of this order of poetic action,—the omnipotent freewill of the artist's mind,—our curbed and slackening world may seem to have seen the last. It has been succeeded by another kind of "finish," devoted and ardent, but less building on ensured foundations than self-questioning in the very moment of action or even later: yet by such creative labour also the evening and the morning may be blent to a true day, though it be often but a fitful or an unglowing one. Not only with this second class, but even with those highest among consummate workers, productiveness must be found, at the close of life, to have been comparatively limited; though never failing, where a true master is in question, of such mass as is necessary to robust vitality.

That Dr. Hake is to be ranked with those poets who, in striving to perfect what they do as best they may, resolve to have a tussle for their own with Oblivion, is evident on comparison of his present little volume with its predecessor of a year or two ago. A portion of its contents is reproduced from that former book, but so remoulded by a searching self-criticism as to give the reader the best possible guarantee of its being worth his while to follow the author in his future course. We believe, on the whole, that Dr. Hake will do well in cultivating chiefly, as he does here, the less intricate of his poetic tendencies. His former poem of *Madeline*,—a tragic narrative couched in a metre, and invested with an imagery, which recalled the Miltonic ode or the Petrarchian canzone,—presented, amid much that was unmanageable, some striking elements of success. But there were other compositions in the same volume to which some readers must have turned with astonishment, after reading *Madeline*, and wondered that the writer who had so much genuine command over the heart as these displayed should be at pains to put his thoughts elsewhere in a difficult and exclusive form. Such a book does not get rapidly abroad, yet the piece called *Old Souls* is probably already secure of a distinct place in the literature of our day, and we believe the same may be predicted of other poems in the little collection just issued.

The finest new poem here is *The Blind Boy*, which gives scope to all the poet's sympathies by summoning the beloved beauties of visible nature round the ideal of a mysterious exclusion and isolation. Speaking of the aim alone, we may say that perhaps there is hardly in Wordsworth himself any single poem of equal length which from

so central a standpoint interpenetrates the seen with the unseen, bounded always in a familiar circle of ideas. The blind boy—heir to the lands and sea-coast which are dark to him alone—has their beauties transmitted to him by description through his loving sister's eyes and lips. Some of the opening stanzas, wherein the poet spreads the scenery before us, are very direct and spacious :—

“Clouds, folded round the topmost peaks,
Shut out the gorges from the sun
Till midday, when the early streaks
Of sunshine down the valley run ;
But where the opening cliffs expand,
The early sea-light breaks on land.

“Before the sun, like golden shields,
The clouds a lustre shed around ;
Wild shadows gambolling o'er the fields,
Tame shadows stretching o'er the ground.
Towards noon the great rock-shadow moves,
And takes slow leave of all it loves.”

The descriptions become yet more beautiful, and assume an under-current of relative significance, when the sister and brother are the speakers :—

“She tells him how the mountains swell,
How rocks and forests touch the skies ;
He tells her how the shadows dwell
In purple dimness on his eyes,
Whose tremulous orbs the while he lifts,
As round his smile their spirit drifts.

“More close around his heart to wind,
She shuts her eyes in childish glee,
'To share,' she said, 'his peace of mind ;
'To sit beneath his shadow-tree.'
So, half in play, the sister tries
To find his soul within her eyes.

“His hand in hers, she walks along
And leads him to the river's brink ;
She stays to hear the water's song,
Closing her eyes with him to think.
His ear, more watchful than her own,
Caught up the ocean's distant moan.

“‘The river's flow is bright and clear,’
The blind boy said, ‘and were it dark
We should no less its music hear :
Sings not at eventide the lark ?
Still when the ripples pause, they fade
Upon my spirit like a shade.’

“‘Yet, brother, when the river stops,
And in the quiet bay is hushed,
E'en though its gentle murmur drops,
'Tis bright as when by us it rushed ;
It is not like a shade the more
Except beneath the wooded shore.’”

The second stanza here has much of that colossal infancy of expression which we find in William Blake. Such touches, sometimes quite masterly, as here, sometimes striving with what yet remains but half said, are characteristic of this poet.

The blind boy—blind early but not from his birth—speaks again :—

“‘The waves with mingling echoes fall ;
And memories of a long-lost light
From far-off mornings seem to call,
And what I hear comes into sight.
The beauteous skies flash back again,
But ah ! the light will not remain !’”

The stanzas which follow are perhaps the most subtle and suggestive in the poem :—

“ Awhile he pauses ; as he stops,
Her little hand the sister moves,
And pebbles on the water drops,
As it runs up the sandy grooves ;
Or to her ear a shell applies,
With parted lips and dreaming eyes.

“ ‘ That noise ! ’ said he, with lifted hand.
‘ The sea-gull’s scream and flapping wings.
Before the wind it flies to land,
And omens of a tempest brings.’
She tells him how the sea-bird pale
Whirls wildly on the coming gale.

“ ‘ And is the sea alone ? Even now
I hear faint mutterings.’ ‘ ‘Tis the waves.’
‘ It seems a murmur sweeping low
And hurrying through the distant caves.
I hear again that smothered tone,
As if the sea were not alone.’ ”

Less elevated in tone than *The Blind Boy*, but perhaps still more complete from the artistic point of view, in the clear flow of its familiar observation and homely pathos, is the poem entitled *The Cripple*. We have given *The Blind Boy* the higher place on account of its more ideal treatment ; but a careful reading of *The Cripple* will show it to be nothing less than a masterpiece in its simple way, and so blended together in its parts that it is very difficult to extract from it so as to convey the emotional impression which the verses produce when read in sequence. The cripple is the helpless son of a poor village widow, charwoman or washerwoman as the chance presents itself.

“ As a wrecked vessel on the sand,
The cripple to his mother clung :
Close to the tub he took his stand
While she the linen washed and wrung ;
And when she hung it out to dry
The cripple still was standing by.

“ When she went out to char, he took
His fife, to play some simple snatch
Before the inn hard by the brook,
While for the traveller keeping watch,
Against the horse’s head to stand,
Or hold its bridle in his hand.

“ Sometimes the squire his penny dropped
Upon the road for him to clutch,
Which, as it rolled, the cripple stopped,
Striking it nimbly with his crutch.
The groom, with leathern belt and pad,
E’en found a copper for the lad.

“ The farmer’s wife her hand would dip
Down her deep pocket with a sigh ;
Some halfpence in his hand would slip,
When there was no observer nigh ;
Or give him apples for his lunch,
That he loved leisurely to munch.

“ But for the farmer, what he made,
At market table he would spend,
And boys who used not plough or spade
Had got the parish for their friend :
He paid his poor-rates to the day,
So let the boy ask parish-pay.

“ Yet would the teamster feel his fob,
The little cripple’s heart to cheer,
Himself of penny pieces rob,
That he begrudged to spend in beer.
His boy, too, might be sick or sore,
So gave he of his thrifty store.”

All this is a good deal lost without the aid of the preceding introductory picture of village life. The above passage is succeeded by a charming brookside description of the cripple's favourite haunt. What follows we must pursue to the close, though the extract be rather a long one:—

“There with soft notes his life he filled—
A mere tin plaything from the mart,
With holes at equal distance drilled,
To which his fingers grace impart,
While it obeys his lips' control,
And is a crutch unto his soul.

“At church he longed his life to try,
Where oboe gave its doleful note,
Where fiddle scraped harsh melody,
Where bass the rustic vitals smote.
Such music then was all in vogue,
And psalms were sung in village brogue.

“His cheerful ways gave many cause
For wonder; nay, his very joy
To others' mirth would give a pause:
His soul so like his body's toy,
So childish, yet with face of age,
Beginning at life's latter stage.

“Dead is his crutch on moping days—
'Tis so they call his sickly fits,
When by his side his crutch he lays,
And in the chimney-corner sits,
Hobbling in spirit near the yew
That in the village churchyard grew.

“Ah! it befell at harvest-time—
Such are the ways of Providence,—
That the poor widow in her prime
Was fever-struck, and hurried hence;
Then did he wish indeed to lie
Between her arms and with her die.

“Who shall the cripple's woes beguile?
Who earn the bread his mouth to feed?
Who greet him with a mother's smile?
Who tend him in his utter need?
Who lead him to the sanded floor?
Who put his crutch behind the door?

“Who set him in his wadded chair,
And after supper say his grace?
Who to invite a loving air
His life upon the table place?
Who, as he plays, her eyes shall lift
In wonder at a cripple's gift?

“Who ask him all the news that chanced—
Of farmer's wife in coat and hat,
Of squire who to the city pranced—
To draw him out in lively chat?
This flood of love, now but a surf
Left on a nameless mound of turf.

“Some it made sigh, and some made talk,
To see the guardian of the poor
Call for the boy to take a walk,
And lead him to the workhouse door:
With lifted hands and boding look
They watched him cross the village brook.”

Old Morality is a poem differing much from the two already dwelt upon, as being a kind of light satirical allegory, yet having an affinity to them by its rustic surroundings, and producing much the same impression as the old verse-inscribed Emblems of a whole school of Dutch and English moralists. We hardly think it possible to extract from this piece; nor, though full of thoughtful perceptive whimsi-

cality, does it quite possess that consequent clear-headedness which must be the first principle of all allegory, whether serious or humorous, whereof twilight is the true atmosphere, but fog the utter destruction. Nevertheless we may refer the reader to the poem itself, as one characterized by flashes of genial wisdom and by delicate and pleasurable execution. The sound of its title recalls rather awkwardly Scott's *Old Mortality* (a kind of trivial obstruction by no means beneath artistic notice); and for the symbolism of the poem it seems to us that another representative name—*Old Veracity* for instance—would have been actually more to the purpose than the word *Mortality*, which men have long conspired to beset with endless ambiguities.

We have not yet noticed the poem entitled *Mother and Child* which stands first in the volume, and which has a more distinctly dramatic aim than appears in its other contents. We must admit that this poem is far from satisfying us. Its subject is this. A young lady, leaving the Opera, sees suddenly in the street a mother and infant whose aspect—that of the child especially, which seems confused in her mind with the face of her affianced lover,—continues to haunt her memory most painfully. Meeting them again by accident, she makes inquiry and finds that the child is in fact her lover's illegitimate offspring; whereupon she expresses by words and by good deeds the gratitude due to the unconscious agents of her own rescue from the hands of him who had ruined and abandoned another. This invention is striking and certainly not impossible; but to reconcile us to its exceptional features, it requires much more individuality in the working out, and much more space for the purpose, than are here bestowed upon it. Its steady abruptness in disposing, one after another, of incidents sufficiently surprising to give us pause, recalls somewhat the pseudo-ballads of a past generation, and its execution is certainly stiffer and more prosaic than is the case with any other piece in the series. However, it has, like all its author puts forth, the genuine charm of human sympathy, and on a wider canvas its conception might probably have been developed to good purpose.

The present writer has on a former occasion spoken elsewhere of several poems here reproduced from the earlier volume,—notably of *Old Souls* and the subtly exquisite *Lily of the Valley*. He will here only note that—with the exception of *Old Souls*, which needed and has received hardly any modification—every piece which Dr. Hake has presented for the second time has been made his own afresh by that double of himself, the self-critic, who should be one always with the poet. We do not venture to say that harmony of sound and clearness of structure have been everywhere equally mastered throughout the present collection; but so much has been done that to doubt further progress in fresh work would be unjust to the author. Though disposed to encourage him to the pursuit chiefly of the path in poetry which this volume follows, we should not regret to find his thoughts clothed sometimes in more varied and even more adventurous lyrical forms.

Though much has been said concerning the matter-of-fact tendencies of the reading public which poets desire to enlist, it must we think be admitted that the simpler and more domestic order of themes has not been generally, of late years, the most widely popular. Indeed these have probably had less than their due in the balance of immediate acceptance. It would be easy to point to examples,—for instance, to the work which Mr. Allingham has done so well in this field,—above all, to his very memorable book, *Laurence Bloomfield in Ireland*,—a solid and undeniable achievement, no less a historical record than a searching poetic picture of those manners which can alone be depicted with a *certainly* of future value,—the manners of our own time. Yet such a book as this seems yet to have its best day to come. Should Dr. Hake's more restricted, but lovely and

sincere, contributions to the poetry of real life, not find the immediate response they deserve, he may at least remember that others also have failed to meet at once with full justice and recognition. But we will hope for good encouragement to his present and future work; and can at least assure the lover of poetry (but indeed we have proved it to him by quotation) that in these simple pages he shall find not seldom a humanity limpid and pellucid,—the well-spring of a true heart, with which his heart must mingle as with their own element.

Dr. Hake has been fortunate in the beautiful drawings which Mr. Arthur Hughes has contributed to his little volume. No poet could have a more congenial yoke-fellow than this gifted and imaginative artist. The lovely little picture which heads the *Lily of the Valley* must satisfy even the most jealous admirer of the poem, and that to the *Blind Boy* leaves nothing to desire, full as it is of a gracious and kindred melancholy. The illustration to *Old Morality* is another decided success, except perhaps for the too plump and juvenile sexton; and that to the *Cripple* has great sweetness, only the poor widow here is hardly "in her prime" as described in the text, and her son thus looks more like her grandson. We should be glad to find the poet and the artist again in company.

PROSERPINA

FOR A PICTURE

THE picture represents Proserpina as Empress of Hades. After she was conveyed by Pluto to his realm and became his bride, her mother Ceres importuned Jupiter for her return to earth, and he was prevailed on to consent to this, provided only she had not partaken of any of the fruits of Hades. It was found however that she had eaten one grain of a pomegranate, and this enchained her to her new empire and destiny.

She is represented in a gloomy corridor of her palace, with the fatal fruit in her hand. As she passes, a gleam strikes on the wall behind her from some inlet suddenly opened, admitting for a moment the light of the upper world; and she glances furtively towards it, immersed in thought. The incense-burner stands beside her as the attribute of a goddess. The ivy-branch in the background (a decorative appendage to the sonnet inscribed on the label) may be taken as a symbol of clinging memory.

SCRAPS

"The Press-gang—a Satire." The Verminiad. A Foul Fool. Mum as a Muffin.

Fuseli and such painters are the vultures to Michelangelo's eagle.

Dickens was an inspired bagman—an articulate counter-jumper.

Dickens must needs be not a good author only, but a bad actor of his own parts too. Having created something remarkable, he cannot leave it to itself, but goes on to smother it in heaps of gag.

To the anonymous, pseudonymous, and caconominous—to the Ancient Order of Vermin in highest and lowest places—another volume is now consigned.

The memory of past pleasure, in pain, brings a sting at first, but afterwards a salve.

Christina—the isolation of a bird, remote, minute, and distinct; shy like a bird.

Thackeray is the valet of Society, to whom not one of his masters is a hero. He lives upon small advantages, which he exacts from all alike.

An artist often hates his own best work in the same way as the better works of others: it is equally a perpetual self-reproach.

Why should an inventor usurp the critics' share of function by replying to them? or refuse to admit, as they practically assert, that he was born to do work which they were born to talk about?

Picture—Cavalier standing before full-length portrait of lady.

The approach of death wraps us in clouds of contention.

As one who falls asleep on a hill, and, waking, sees sunset (as he thinks) in the sky, and forebodes a darkling night to travel further; but, as the light widens, finds that it is the dawn of a new day.

Bill and Co—Lovers' names.

Perlascura: a twelve-fold Portrait, autotyped from the Studies of D. G. R.—(or) One Portrait in twelve Studies autotyped from the Drawings of D. G. R.

FOR "THE CUP OF WATER."—All that he *might* do rushed through his soul—passion and wrong-doing and desperate will; as, with wide eye fixed, and his proud and scarcely quivering mouth half-hidden in his beard, he acted it through in his soul, and cast it out.

Whether they be scavengers literary or literally.

Real names.—(Woman's christian name) Pharailde. (Surnames) Malombra: Fina Buzzacarina.

The New Ibis, a Satire: by Anon or Ibid.—Motto—"Anon, Anon, sir."

A slanderous Satirist should indeed have a deal of contempt in his nature; since he has to find enough for others, over and above the amount he must secretly allot to himself.

Tâche de pleurer le plus que tu pourras: on ne pleure jamais assez. La misanthropie est faite des larmes qui sont restées au fond du cœur.

En un moment il lui dit mille paroles insensées, avec la rapidité d'un torrent qui bondit entre des rochers, et répète le même son sous mille formes différentes.

La fatigue du bonheur, cette délicieuse mélancholie du corps.

Les poètes sont les échos de la Nature. La Nature chante, et les poètes répètent ses chansons.

SAMUEL PALMER

(1875-81)

THERE is an inevitable sense of presumption on the part of a junior like myself (though certainly a ripe one enough) in venturing to say thus cursorily what remains in my mind as the result of our conversation relating to Samuel Palmer's genius. Such a manifestation of spiritual force absolutely present—though not isolated as in Blake—has certainly never been united with native landscape-power in the same degree as Palmer's works display; while, when his glorious colouring is abandoned for the practice of etching, the same exceptional unity of soul and sense appears again, with the same rare use of manipulative material. The possessors of his works have what *must* grow in influence, just as the possessors of Blake's creations are beginning to find; but with Palmer the progress must be more positive, and infinitely more rapid, since, while a specially select artist to the few, he has a realistic side on which he touches the many, more than Blake can ever do.

* * * * *

I know that you were one of those who were most attached to the good man as well as to the good painter. His works are clear beacons of inspiration, which is a point very hard to attain to in landscape art; but in him one may almost say that it was as evident as in Blake.

SCRAPS

There are certain passionate phases of the soul where to know a thing true, and to believe it, are found two separate things.

He who knows how much too late it is forbears to look at his watch.

Aura and Aurora. Descriptions of both. Both belonging to one man. Which did he cherish, and spurn the other? A question most fitly answered by the scornful lip of a Devil in hell.

In refined natures of humble birth breeding seems to have preceded it in a former existence, and the peasant-woman looks and is born a queen.

If Man be a noun of multitude, let me sue *in formâ pauperis*, for alone am I.

Subject: Judith displaying head of Holofernes—background all of crowded faces.

He wore a hat-band, and his nails were also in mourning.

I shall be an ancestor, and he is a descendant.

Whosoever be of all men the most a poet, Robert Burns is of all poets the most a man. His enormous identity—the lowly labour united to the plumed and crested intellect—thus shoots up as in overwhelming vigour, and makes his presence a mountain among the hills of Poesy.

Leighton's impasto is scented soap, and his surface violet-powder.

Uglumugli, a Chinese Magician.

Subject for Picture : Caius standing between the statues of Castor and Pollux, to be adored by the people. (*Merivale's Roman Empire*, vol. vi., p. 62.)

I know the green earth only in the form of Terra Verte.

Predella for a picture of the Magdalene :—On one side Magdalene anointing Christ's feet at table ; and on the other, clinging round his feet while taking down from the cross.

Fat is Beauty's Fate.

If an isolated life has any sting, it is felt in the absence of those friends who made for years unneeded avowals of obligation and gratitude. Still, this will come, in time, to pass and be forgotten, if not emphasized by momentary visits once or twice a year. Life is a coin which we once shared together, but which has now quite passed from my pocket into yours—doubtless rightly enough. Only I desire no half-farthing of its small change.

There are moments when Truth must come not as serene dawn, but as jagged lightning.

To find that an unknown man hates you is but a tempest in the outer air : but to find that your friend has turned against you—

Devoted as my time has necessarily been to another art, I have never hoped to produce in poetry more than a small amount of quint-essential work. Thus the intervals between poetic effort have lasted for years at a time ; and of these the present is not the longest.

To the Reader of The House of Life. The "life" involved is neither my life nor your life, but life representative, as tripled with love and death.

Subjects for Pictures. Michelangelo unburying the Laocoon.—Michelangelo at the deathbed of Vittoria Colonna.

Coleridge had to endure through life the self-preserving attacks of relentless mediocrity in high places.

A Title for Poems : Autumn Anemones (or Winter Anemones).

Endymion is a magic toy, fit for the childhood of a divine poet. The man, however, already appears in the interview with Diana (part 2). Nothing but humanity would do here ; and this it is that the poet employs, artfully entwining it with supernatural exclamation,

Milton at a relative's in St. Martin's Lane, when his first wife appeared, and implored his forgiveness. They mingled their tears, and were reunited.

NOTES UPON A LIFE OF DAVID SCOTT

P. 46.—D. Scott describes his outlines, published towards 1831, entitled, *Of Man, Six Monograms* : No. 5 is "*Of Power*." ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—These Monograms are perhaps the finest of all his abstract works ; the style a little faint and timid, but more correct than much that he did later. No. 5 is a very grand composition.

P. 87.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Between the mode of the old Masters

here [Florence], I mean before Buonarroti, in producing their intellects, and that of the older poets, there is much in common: in both much individuality of imitation united to great abstractedness and symbolic remoteness, with all the vagaries of an early day. Both are full of features the manner of the formation of which is accidental, rising out of their freedom from and ignorance of critical rules. The ideas and separated portions of their works hang together by a connexion often perfectly unforeseen; or are separated in a way that mere inventors (*makers*, I should call them in this view) of tales, poems, and pictures, do not often venture upon; or rather do not dream of. Shakespear is like them at times. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—He sees truly, but does not admire! (So says Rossetti, but some not inconsiderable spice of admiration appears to be implied in Scott's words.)

P. 89.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—A large oil-picture by himself (Michelangelo), painted on wood; the subject, *The Virgin with the Child and Saints*. It is dreadfully incorrect in drawing. It puts me in mind of some of my own attempts of years since—I mean in the sort of blundering; uniting parts wrong and suppressing some, to the exaggeration of others. In some portions there is great strength of imitation; and in some of the faces etc. the colour is good and the style formed, but the execution is feeble and restrained. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Too true all David Scott's life.

P. 100.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Generally, when Rubens comes in contact with Titian and Giorgione, he looks grey, red, and brown: but his genius in design and general fertility as often again repays this with scornful superiority. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Stuff. Rubens's design, though fertile, is *always* united with bad taste.

P. 106.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Guido's *Aurora*, one of the finest productions of Italian art. Guido is a great painter. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Not the current view, but worth considering.

P. 117.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Buonarroti is of a strong low character, rather than exalted or great: he could do nothing pure or grand in beauty. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—The devil he couldn't! What could you do? Strumps and lumps.

P. 127.—A passage in which D. Scott passes rapidly from one notion to another. Poetry, painting, all appears weak stuff. Raphael, like nature, everywhere defective. Caravaggio's *Entombment*, nothing comes up to its strength. In his own work, *Sappho and Anacreon*, he is ashamed of its prettiness: some previous works more his true line. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Thinking in all directions after this kind is ruin. He puts a ! to the term "prettiness" as applied to a picture by Scott, whose defect did certainly not lie in that direction.

P. 143.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Praise of pictures in the Naples Museum by Spagnoletto and Caravaggio. Could I meet such men in life, I would surely be happy. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Happy! They were horrid ruffians. Yet he never yearns for Michelangelo.

P. 146.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—An excursion to Capri. Little thought has passed across my mind to-day. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Horrible self-consciousness. What the devil did it matter?

P. 156.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—An early visit from Rothwell. Praised my other pictures, but not my large one. Why did I stake my own self-opinion by bringing so much to the bar of Roman or any other criticism? Running myself into inconvenience to gain misconception and neglect. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Or to learn completeness necessary.

P. 157.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Giovanni Bellini's last work, finished by Titian, is a curious stiff production. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Why, this must be the lovely *Feast of Gods*.

P. 166.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Evening, for the last time with Buonarroti's *Moses*. Phidias and Praxiteles are the great sculptors. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT (on the *Moses*).—Which he doesn't like; and right too about this one work of Michelangelo.

P. 167.—D. Scott wrote in verse a *Farewell to Rome*, containing the following lines :

“ Briefly then, I cast
My hat upon my head. ‘Ye men of Rome,
Farewell; and ye fair donnas kindly haste
Your long addio, else it will not come
More strongly on my ear than would a grey fly’s hum.’ ”

ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—There’s the rub: he had no joy in life.

P. 187.—W. B. SCOTT’S TEXT.—A living artist has said in a short autobiography, “It is good to have no more thoughts than we can express.” ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—Etty? And yet his works are great lessons in ways where one might look in vain to David Scott.

P. 192.—W. B. SCOTT’S TEXT.—Some minds, the most catholic it may be, seem to be the media through which Nature speaks. Raphael is a higher example than Shakespear—for this reason only, that the sphere of his operation was accidentally nobler; the christian mythology and the sacred history of redemption include higher humanities than the secular drama of England could possibly touch. ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—Stuff.

P. 193.—W. B. SCOTT’S TEXT.—Raphael reached nearer to the expression of the character of Christ than (it may be) any other man has done in art or poetry. ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—No.

P. 235.—D. SCOTT’S TEXT.—The Elgin Marbles show irregular but flesh-expressing folds of skin and muscle. The Apollo [Belvedere], in its higher aim, does not admit of these particulars, but simply adopts form as its necessary means of medium. ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—And is much the worse for it.

P. 243.—D. SCOTT’S TEXT.—The remains in Herculaneum and Pompeii are copies of the commonplaces of the ancients in painting and sculpture—inferior specimens. ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—What does he mean? Some are extremely fine, if not originals.

P. 267.—W. B. SCOTT’S TEXT.—At this time he [David Scott] was occupied on *Richard III. Receiving the Children of Edward IV. from their Mother*. This picture is strongly defined in all its parts. To the last words Rossetti puts a ! and proceeds: With all sincere respect for David Scott, such a picture as this *Richard* is, by its utter carelessness, neither more nor less than a jumbled daub, such as *no* other painter would have dreamed of putting forth. There must have been some unexplained languor of head or hand.

P. 268.—W. B. Scott gives an anecdote of Turner and Constable: that the latter looked at a picture by the former, and told him “he had never seen anything resembling it in Nature”; when Turner replied: “Very likely you haven’t, but don’t you wish you could?” ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—Constable doubtless thought, No.

P. 279.—W. B. SCOTT’S TEXT.—Every face he [David Scott] painted is soul-informed; and the beauty resulting from the soul shining through the countenance was within his range. ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—He felt it doubtless; he gave it perhaps never.

P. 280.—W. B. SCOTT’S TEXT.—*Peter the Hermit Preaching the Crusades* [a picture by David Scott] was the last picture in this department he painted, and in all mechanical qualities the best. ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—It is full of the most inconceivable deformities. The *Alchemist* picture is incomparably more complete.

P. 281.—W. B. Scott describes some figures in the *Peter the Hermit* picture. The old enthusiastic widow presses her reluctant son into the service of the cross; the warrior and the bearer of the papal banner—and so on. ROSSETTI’S COMMENT.—Oh such figures! four feet high!

P. 282.—W. B. SCOTT'S TEXT.—*The Triumph of Love* is a marvellous piece of colour. *Time and Love*, and some few other pictures, might be mentioned as secondary instances. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—In some of his sketches his colour is worthy of Tintoret. He was a fine colourist, but constantly at fault.

P. 284.—The picture of *The Triumph of Love* being "received with great derision," David Scott wrote on the back of it some words intended as ironically embodying the popular sentiment. "View nothing abstractly or directly. View things in the light in which they are seen by the majority, with the eyes of other men, and work in accepted modes." ROSSETTI'S COROLLARY.—Also have a sane sense of style.

P. 289.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Many of our English plays, Lillo's and others, leave a heavy and useless impression : suffering, in them, is unsupported by elevated relations. This kind of writing, however, especially in connexion with the common circumstances of social life, makes forcible work of a kind. Such is Lockhart's *Adam Blair*. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Why discuss such utter rot at all? To *Adam Blair* he puts a !.

P. 294.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Made a discovery. There is a species of interchange between animal and vegetable nature that makes it impossible to divide them as we try to do. Vegetable becomes animal matter, in decay, and constantly. Man is the maggot not of a rose-stalk but of a country ; or rather a country is the rose-stalk of the maggot man, who is always vegetating in hair, skin, nails. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—One wishes he would tell one some discoveries about methods in painting, instead of this sort of stuff. Difficult to paint man if too much thought of as a maggot.

P. 294.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Coleridge constantly refers to principles, and intends in certain instances to state them, but does not. He asserted certain religious doctrines which he could not evolve in connexion with his whole philosophy, without which they are useless. This has always been the difficulty. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—All such stuff as this of Coleridge etc. is bosh enough for a poet, but final ruin to a painter.

P. 298.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—He [Bailey in *Festus*] calls "America half-brother of the world." Speaking of America in my poems, I call it "broad-breasted demi-world." ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Very different and much subtler meaning in Bailey.

P. 371.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—There is something about this *Assumption* [Titian's] strikes one may have originated from Raphael's *Transfiguration*, in competition with which Piombo painted his principal work, now in London, *The Raising of Lazarus* ; which is inferior to any of them in distinct power, although in intention it is much higher than either Veronese's [*Marriage of Cana*] or Tintoretto's [*Miracle of St. Mark*]. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—That is, the Lazarus : the rest is stupid to excess.

P. 372.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—The picture from the Flood. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—By Girodet : a violently morbid but striking picture, which may have considerably influenced David Scott.

P. 372.—D. SCOTT speaks of the Venetian Accademia, mentioning a picture by Palma Vecchio and one by Bonifazio. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Never a word anywhere of Carpaccio : strange this, in an original mind.

P. 406.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Raphael united the study and care of the advance of art with the facility of its maturity, in the different stages of his career. Michelangelo also did so. Luini, and before him Leonardo, reached the highest summit of the elder age of art. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—He never does full justice to the superior position of Leonardo.

P. 411.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Church del Carmine. The frescoes of

Masaccio are here: the *Adam and Eve*, and the figure Raphael borrowed. The general arrangement of Masaccio's work has been studied by Raphael—his style of drapery, and mode of clothing his figures. The character of his heads too afterwards shone forth in Raphael. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—The proportions much finer than in Raphael, and sentiment on the whole probably higher.

P. 422.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Barberini Palace. The *Fornarina* by Raphael. The original picture, full of fidelity: the bare trueness of the hands, their defective paw-like attitude, and the same quality in the face—all is transcribed. Fine eyes: she must have been a beautiful animal. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT—which is meant, I think, for verse, though its cramped position in the margin huddles it together:

"A Fornarina, David,
Is much better than nothing at all:
A lodging in her oven
Would have made you a warmer soul."

P. 432.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Academy of St. Luke. Albani: *A Virgin*, very feeble. He was scarcely a painter; at least not one to rank with Guido, the Caracci, and others with whom he is associated. By intercourse with art and such men as these he effected some pictures which have been too much praised. He is a composite painter, of a productive class, made up, like the mass of artists of the present time. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—True.

P. 437.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Naples Gallery: Niccolò dell' Abate. *The Virgin with an Angel*, etc. very deep, strong, and true, of the Leonardo gusto, but richer in the draperies. This picture is exquisite in its style, which is possibly the noblest for high dramatic works. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—i.e. the style of Leonardo: true.

P. 440.—D. SCOTT'S TEXT.—Naples Gallery. Raphael: *The Madonna*. A most beautiful face: no one but himself ever painted this Madonna beauty. ROSSETTI'S COMMENT.—Rot: a low order of beauty.

SCRAPS

Subject for Picture—Round Tower at Jhansi.

Articles:—1, Marlowe and Chatterton. 2, The Poems of Nero, and the latest French Muse.

As, in a tract of lifeless land, the scattered pools of rain-water that for a moment catch the sky as the traveller passes, so are the far-apart intervals of living labour in the life of an idle man. After death, if these brief intervals be worthy, will all be sky-brimmed water, or all a desert of sand?

To paint Virgin and Child. Child climbing up mother's bosom. Angels behind might hold branches of the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge. In distance might be seen Eden and flaming sword.

NOTE ON ROSSETTI'S BOYISH BALLAD-POEM, SIR HUGH THE HERON

I make this note after a conversation with a friend who had been reading in the British Museum a ridiculous first attempt of mine in verse, called *Sir Hugh the Heron*, which was printed when I was fourteen,

but written (except the last page or two) at twelve—as my family would probably remember. When I was fourteen, my grandfather (who amused himself by having a small private printing-press) offered, if I would finish it, to print it. I accordingly added the last precious touches two years after writing the rest. I leave this important explanation, as there is no knowing what fool may some day foist the absurd trash into print as a production of mine. It is curious and surprising to myself, as evincing absolutely no promise at all—less than should exist even at twelve. When I wrote it, the only English poet I had read was Sir W. Scott, as is plain enough in it.

FOR THE PREDELLAS OF THE PICTURE, DANTE'S DREAM

No. 1.—Dante, being sick and crying out in a dream of his lady's death, is bewept by his near kinswoman; whom other ladies lead thence, by reason of her grief, and awaken him.

No. 2.—Dante recounts his dream to the ladies who have awakened him; whereto his grieving kinswoman also hearkens apart.

NOTES BY WM. M. ROSSETTI

NOTES BY W. M. ROSSETTI

P. 3.—THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.—As has often been mentioned, this poem was written by Dante Rossetti before he was fully nineteen years of age, i.e., before May 12th, 1847. I would not say that it was composed "in order" that it might figure in a small manuscript magazine for family produce and consumption named "Hodgepodge," but there it did figure. I know we all admired it, but do not with any precision remember the attendant circumstances. The very first form of the poem appears to have been lost: it was seriously revised in printed shape more than once before it appeared in the volume of 1870. A great deal has been written about this poem here and there—far more than I can now attempt to summarize. It appears possible that, if Rossetti is to be known at a future time as "the poet of so-and-so," it will be as "the poet of The Blessed Damozel." The earliest reference of his own which I find to the composition is in a letter of June 1848, where, in consequence of something which Leigh Hunt had said to him by letter, he speaks of it as "written in a kind of Gothic manner which I suppose he is pleased to think belongs to the school of Dante." So we can see that "Gothic" was a keynote with Rossetti as far back as 1847. He painted "The Blessed Damozel" twice—besides making some drawings applicable to the poem. The first of the two oil-pictures was executed in 1876-7, for Mr. William Graham: he it was, I think, who actually proposed the subject, although Rossetti had some previous idea of painting it at some time or other. The second picture, which omits the groups of re-united lovers in the background, dates in 1879. Some other painters also have painted from this poem. "The Blessed Damozel" has been translated into Italian by Signor Ettore Ciccotti. I have seen also some versions in French; but not, I think, in verse, as the mode of contemporary French translators is to use delicately touched prose. Moreover, a Cantata of "The Blessed Damozel" has been composed by Mr. Reginald Clarke, and another by Debussy.

P. 6.—DANTE AT VERONA.—The commencement of this poem dates very early, perhaps even before 1848. It may have been substantially completed towards 1852; but was modified in various regards prior to 1870, the year of its first publication. In 1861 Rossetti must have looked upon it as about his chief work; for in the volume "The Early Italian Poets" appeared an advertisement of the forthcoming publication of "Dante at Verona, and other Poems."

P. 6.—"For years had made him haggard now." A phrase translated from Dante's "Comedia": so also the beginning of the ensuing stanza. This poem by Rossetti is full of references to Dante's writings, or to the narratives of events in his life. The slight notes appended by my brother to the poem itself make the details tolerably plain: but it may be said in general that a thorough relish for "Dante at Verona" can only be attained by readers who come to it well imbued with the subject-matter.

P. 17.—THE BRIDE'S PRELUDE.—A good deal of this uncompleted poem was written at a very early date, say 1848-9. This portion may have extended up to about p. 27, "Not the guilt only made the shame," etc.; and the poem was then named "Bride-chamber Talk." The date of the remainder is less definite to me; perhaps towards 1859-60

for the most part; and in the earlier portion considerable changes in diction, etc. were effected about the same time. My brother found it convenient to introduce the composition into his modified volume "Poems" of 1881: otherwise he had practically laid it aside for many years before his death, and would probably never have completed it, even in a longer term of life. I find a memorandum in his handwriting of the contemplated conclusion of the poem, written perhaps towards 1878. "Urscelyn has become celebrated as a soldier of fortune, selling his sword to the highest bidder, and in this character reports reach Aloÿse and her family respecting him. Aloÿse now becomes enamoured of a young knight who loves her deeply; this leads, after fears and hesitations, to her confessing to him the stain on her life; he still remains devoted to her. Urscelyn now reappears; his influence as a soldier renders a lasting bond with him desirable to the brothers of Aloÿse, much as they hate him; and he, on his side, is bent on assuming an important position in the family to which he as yet only half belongs. He therefore offers marriage to Aloÿse, supported by the will of her brothers, who moreover are well aware of the blot they have to efface, which would thus disappear. At a tournament Urscelyn succeeds in treacherously slaying the knight to whom Aloÿse has betrothed herself; and this death is followed in due course by the bridal to which the poem relates. It winds up with the description of the last preparations preceding the bridal procession. Amelotte would draw attention to the passing of the time. Aloÿse then says: 'There is much now that you remember; how we heard that Urscelyn had become a soldier of fortune, and how he returned here, etc. You must also remember well the death of that young knight at the tourney.' Amelotte should then describe the event, and say how well she remembers Urscelyn's bitter grief at the mischance. Aloÿse would then tell her how she herself was betrothed secretly to the young knight, and how Urscelyn slew him intentionally. As the bridal procession appears, perhaps it might become apparent that the brothers mean to kill Urscelyn when he has married her." I believe that this last effective incident was suggested by Swinburne.—There is a little memorandum by my brother to this effect: "It has been written so many years, and is so much less tempting to take up than a new thing, that, if I venture to follow the perilous precedent of Coleridge, and to print it as it has long stood" (the sentence remains unfinished).

P. 26.—"Thine own voice speaking unto thee." Rossetti has somewhere mentioned that his design "How They met Themselves" was suggested by a passage in "The Bride's Prelude." I think this must be the passage: but am almost sure that it was originally followed by a stanza (which he did not print) extending the idea. I seem to remember, as the first line of that stanza,

"In places of deep water at night."

There is something of like kind in "The Portrait" (p. 169),

"And your own footsteps meeting you."

P. 26.—"An hour's remaining yet." For profusion and passion of pictorial detail I do not think that Rossetti ever wrote anything more noticeable than "The Bride's Prelude," early as the commencement of it was. The defect of the poem, it has always appeared to me, is that the narrative proceeds too slowly, and with particulars too minute: see especially the stanzas, further on, about a pack of cards. If only an hour was remaining yet, the heart-sore bride would surely have made more haste towards her conclusion.

P. 29.—"The Prince was fled into the west." If my brother

intended this part of the poem to have any sort of historical background (probably enough not), he may have been thinking of the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI., who headed the "Praguerie," an unsuccessful coalition against the project of a standing army, in 1439.

P. 36.—JENNY.—This much-discussed poem was begun at an extremely youthful age—may even have been before the end of 1847, or in Rossetti's twentieth year. The portion then written was short, and was merely in the nature of general reflection—not (as now) of semi-dramatic monologue. The composition was finished towards 1858, but again revised late in 1869. It has been translated into Italian under the name of "Genti," by Luigi Gamberale. The passage "Like a toad within a stone," etc. belongs, I think, to the first draft of the poem.

P. 37.—"And from the wise unchildish elf." This is certainly a reminiscence from the early boyhood of the author. He and I used to walk down Regent Street to and from King's College School: and to him it fell to serve as the "schoolmate lesser than" some boy, his companion at the moment.

P. 44.—A LAST CONFESSION.—This was written at much the same time as the commencement of "The Bride's Prelude," etc.; and, though not a little modified before publication, is essentially its original self. The reader may opine that the form of the poem is partly derived from Byron's "Giaour," and that its style and method show a trace of Browning. This would, I think, be a fair comment, yet hardly such as to trench upon the personal individuality of the poem. An unfair comment was that of Mr. Robert Buchanan, that it "positively reeks of morbid lust." Where is the reek apparent? An Italian translation of the "Last Confession" was made by Antonio Agresti (my son-in-law), and published in Florence, in a volume with other translations and a prefatory essay, in 1899. There had been a previous translation, 1881, by Luigi Gamberale; also a later one, by Professor E. Teza.

P. 44.—"Our Lombard country-girls along the coast." Every one except Dante Rossetti knows that Lombardy has no coast: however, the "Regno Lombardo-Veneto" (named in the heading of the poem) has a coast in its Venetian section. My brother was reckless, and also ignorant, in matters of this kind. The place-name "Iglio," further on, is an invention.

P. 55.—THE BURDEN OF NINEVEH.—Written in the autumn of 1850; and then, I think, brought to completion, but an attentive revision was made later on. The poem was first published anonymously in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, 1856, and roused the strong admiration of Ruskin before he knew its authorship.

P. 59.—THE STAFF AND SCRIP.—My brother found the story of this in the "Gesta Romanorum," and schemed out the poem in September 1849. Its actual composition came somewhat later. It was first published in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, 1856, and is one of the compositions which Agresti translated into Italian. Canon Dixon, himself a poet, has written thus: "'The Staff and Scrip' is, in my judgment, the finest of all Rossetti's poems, and one of the most glorious writings in the language. It exhibits in flawless perfection the gift that he had above all other writers—absolute beauty and pure action." Whether this is "the finest" of my brother's poems may be disputed: but I certainly think that it yields to none. The tale which he found in the "Gesta Romanorum" is numbered twenty-five, with the title "Of Ingratitude." Rossetti wholly transmuted it in sentiment and significance. The tale, which is briefly narrated without descriptive or other amplification, runs thus. A noble lady was oppressed and despoiled by a tyrannical king. A pilgrim visited her, and remained in her house some while. He offered to fight on her behalf, on condition that, were he to die, his staff and scrip should be preserved in her private chamber. She promised this: he fought,

conquered, and died, and the staff and scrip were preserved as stipulated. The lady being now again in high prosperity, three neighbouring kings, agreeing among themselves, offered that she should choose any one of them as a husband. She issued forth gorgeously habited: then, reflecting that the staff and scrip would look shabby in her chamber, she had them removed, "and thus forgot her vows, and plainly evinced her ingratitude." The tale is followed by "The Application." The Lady is the Soul: the Tyrant, the Devil; the Pilgrim, Christ; the three Kings are the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. These we receive "into the chamber of our souls, and put away the memorials of our Saviour's love."

P. 64.—SISTER HELEN.—This poem was first published in 1854 in the English form of the *Düsseldorf Annual*, at the invitation of the editress, Mrs. Howitt. It had been written a couple of years before. It reappeared with some improvements in the volume "Poems" of 1870; and again in the partly modified re-issue of that volume in 1881. Mr. Buchanan appraised it as "affected rubbish": but this is not the universal estimate. The stanzas regarding the bride of Keith of Ewern are additions proper to that ultimate form of the poem. "Sister Helen" (like two other poems) was translated into Italian by Antonio Agresti, along with some minor lyrics. In the *Düsseldorf Annual*, the only author's signature was H. H. H., the designation of a very hard lead pencil; because (as Rossetti said) people alleged that his style was hard.

P. 74.—THE HOUSE OF LIFE.—The dates of the various sonnets which make up this series are extremely various. The earliest of them dates in 1847. The latest comes in 1881, in the Autumn of which year the series was published in its completed form. One positive line of demarcation between the various sonnets separates those which appeared in the volume "Poems," published in the Spring of 1870, from any others. I know a good deal as to the true dates of the sonnets, and in the Table of Contents I supply the requisite information.

The "Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," the work of the friend of his closing days, Mr. Hall Caine, shows that the author regarded "Stillborn Love," "Known in Vain," "Lost Days," and "The One Hope" (Nos. 55, 65, 86, and 101), as about the best of the series.

In a book of mine entitled "Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Designer and Writer" I have called attention to twelve of the sonnets which bear upon the question of the destiny of the soul. Of these, eight indicate a belief in immortality; three a sense of uncertainty; one does not point clearly in either direction.

Mr. Joseph Knight, in his biography of Rossetti, goes so far as to say that, "taken as a whole, this series of sonnets constitutes, in its class, the greatest gift that poetry has received since the days of Shakespear." Madame Duclaux (then Miss Mary Robinson) exalted "The House of Life" above all Rossetti's other poems, remarking—"Here, for the first time since Milton, the English language is used with a sonority and power rivalling the natural harmonies of Italian or Greek." Some critics, on the other hand—notably Francis Hueffer and Watts-Dunton—have expressed the opinion that the best work of Rossetti is not to be found in these and other sonnets, but rather in those poems which are more or less in the ballad manner.

My book above-named contains, besides its main subject-matter, a prose paraphrase of "The House of Life:" not that I myself deemed this work to be particularly in need of such an explanation, but I was aware that some persons pronounced it to be partly obscure, sometimes doubtfully intelligible. I shall here reproduce, as I find occasion, some of the observations made in that book.

Besides the charge of obscurity, an objection which I have some-

times heard raised against "The House of Life" is its want of absolute cohesion; the series, it is averred, does not form one consecutive poem, but only so many sonnets of sufficiently diverse subject-matter, grouped together. Now this is abundantly true as a fact: whether it forms a solid objection either to the sonnets regarded as a series, or to the act of the author in thus combining them, is a question which readers will decide for themselves. The sonnets are mostly of the kind which we call "occasional"; some incident happened, or some emotion was dominant, and the author wrote a sonnet regarding it. When a good number had been written, they came to form, if considered collectively, a sort of record of his feelings and experiences, his reading of the problems of life—an inscribed tablet of his mind: then, but not before then, he began marshalling them together, and entitled them "The House of Life." This is apparent enough on the face of his published books. In the "Poems" of 1870 there was a section termed "Sonnets and Songs towards a Work to be entitled The House of Life": in his subsequent volume, "Ballads and Sonnets," 1881, all the "songs" were excluded from "The House of Life," and the series was completed by additional sonnets. Rossetti certainly never professed, nor do I consider that he ever wished his readers to assume, that all the items had been primarily planned to form one connected and indivisible whole. The first part of the series, named "Love and Change," has clearly some considerable amount of interdependence; the second part, "Change and Fate," is wider and more diversified in its range, but it may reasonably be maintained that (to put the question at its lowest) the several sonnets gain rather than lose in weight of thought and in artistic balance by being thus associated.

There is, I fancy, a prevailing impression that the tone of "The House of Life" is one of constant and little-mitigated gloom. I do not perceive this to be correct. The tone is almost invariably solemn and exalted: the scale includes melancholy which hardly eludes despair; but it also includes happiness rising into rapture. I have been at the pains of inspecting the sonnets one by one in relation to this question; and I find 42 sonnets the essential tone of which is happy; 35 the essential tone of which is unhappy; and 26 which, though certainly not unemotional, may be termed neutral in regard to happiness or unhappiness. These figures make up the total number, which (including the poem-sonnet and No. 6A) is 103.

I am not aware that any question has been raised as to the meaning of the title "The House of Life"; nor did I ever hear any explanation of it from my brother. He was fond of anything related to astrology or horoscopy—not indeed that he ever paid the least detailed or practical attention to these obsolete speculations; and I understand him to use the term "The House of Life" as a zodiacal adept uses the term "the house of Leo." As the sun is said to be "in the house of Leo," so (as I construe it) Rossetti indicates "Love, Change, and Fate," as being "in the House of Life"; or, in other words, a Human Life is ruled and pervaded by the triple influence of Love, Change, and Fate. See also a note printed on p. 638.

As sonnets (not alone in "The House of Life") form so large a proportion of the poetic product of Dante Rossetti, it may be interesting to give here some remarks of his in a letter addressed to William Bell Scott in August 1871.—"In what you say of my sonnets I agree absolutely as to principles, and partially as to application. I hardly ever do produce a sonnet except on some basis of special momentary emotion. But I think there is another class admissible also, and that is the only other I practise; viz. the class depending on a line or two clearly given you, you know not whence, and calling up a sequence of ideas. This also is a just "raison d'être" for a sonnet; and such are all mine when they do not in some sense belong to the "occasional" class.

P. 74.—INTRODUCTORY SONNET.—The design which Rossetti made to illustrate this sonnet appears as one of the plates in more than one publication. He inserted the design into a copy of David Main's "Treasury of Sonnets," and sent the book as a present to our mother on her eightieth birthday, 1880. He described the drawing thus:—"The Soul is instituting the 'memorial to one dead deathless hour'; a ceremony easily effected by placing a winged hour-glass in a rose-bush, at the same time that she touches the fourteen-stringed harp of the sonnet, hanging round her neck. On the rose-branches trailing over in the opposite corner is seen hanging the Coin, which is the second symbol used for the sonnet. Its 'face' bears the soul, expressed in the butterfly; its 'converse' the Serpent of Eternity enclosing the Alpha and Omega."

P. 76.—NUPTIAL SLEEP.—In the first printed form of "The House of Life," which was (as already stated) the "Sonnets and Songs towards a Work to be entitled The House of Life," forming part of the "Poems" of 1870—this sonnet occupied the same position which it holds in the present volume, between "The Kiss" and "Supreme Surrender." I do not remember that any particular objection was raised against it by any critic from the Spring of 1870 to the Autumn of 1871. At the latter date Mr. Robert Buchanan, in his pseudonymous article in *The Contemporary Review*, denounced the sonnet as impure. It remained in the successive editions of the "Poems" of 1870: but in 1881, when "The House of Life" in its final form was included in the volume "Ballads and Sonnets," this particular item disappeared: it was not there reproduced, and nothing was said about it. Similarly, when I issued "The House of Life" in the "Collected Works" of Rossetti, 1886, and in some subsequent reprints, this sonnet was omitted.

It was first re-inserted in 1904, and again now. The reader may ask why. My answer is that, after all this interval of years, I think it ought to be regarded as an item in Rossetti's literary performance, and re-judged upon its own actual merits. The controversy about "The Fleshly School of Poetry" is an old affair—better forgotten in the interest of Mr. Buchanan himself, who publicly proclaimed in 1881 that his attack upon Rossetti had been entirely erroneous and misjudged, and therefore wrongful—Rossetti's "purpose" being in fact "pure," and his song "blameless." Some persons, on now seeing the sonnet, will concur in Mr. Buchanan's opinion of 1881: it may be that some others will prefer his opinion of 1871, but, even if they do so, it will be without any such feeling of suspicion and repulsion against the general tone of Rossetti's poetry as "Thomas Maitland" then endeavoured to impose upon the credulous.

As I have stated, my brother, in his volume of 1881, withdrew this sonnet: but I do not think that he did so because he was convinced of its peccancy, but because he was willing to concede the point to the timorous-minded. Soon after the "Fleshly School" article had appeared in 1871 he published in *The Athenæum* a rejoinder named "The Stealthy School of Criticism" (reprinted at p. 617 of this volume). The reader can see what Rossetti there stated about "Nuptial Sleep"; contending that it could not rightly be regarded as an isolated utterance complete in itself, but only as one item in a series of sonnets, which might practically count as so many stanzas of a single poem. He said: "I will direct attention (among the love-sonnets of this poem) to Nos. 2, 8, 11, 17, 28, and more especially 13." [These numbers are correct for the "Poems" of 1870—not for the later forms of the series. The sonnets in question are "Love's Redemption" (now called "Love's Testament"), "Passion and Worship," "The Birth-bond," "The Love-Moon," "Stillborn Love," and (No. 13) "Love-Sweetness."]

My own comment on this sonnet, in the original preface to the

"Collected Works" from which I omitted it, ran as follows: "'Nuptial Sleep' appeared in the volume of 'Poems' 1870, but was objected to by Mr. Buchanan, and I suppose by some other censors, as being indelicate; and my brother excluded it from 'The House of Life' in his third volume. I consider that there is nothing in the sonnet which need imperatively banish it from his Collected Works. But his own decision commands mine: and besides it could not now be re-introduced into 'The House of Life,' which he moulded into a complete whole without it, and would be misplaced if isolated by itself—a point as to which his opinion is very plainly set forth in his prose paper, 'The Stealthy School of Criticism.'" As I now hold that "Nuptial Sleep" ought to be "banished" no longer, I have inserted the item in its original sequence; I number it 6a, leaving the numeration otherwise unaltered.

I will mention one other point. Tennyson, it is well known, was a resolute adversary of anything even tending towards the licentious in poetry. What was his opinion of "Nuptial Sleep?" We find it authentically recorded by his old friend Professor Francis T. Palgrave in the "Memoir of Tennyson" by his son, vol. 2, p. 505: "The passion and imaginative power of the sonnet 'Nuptial Sleep' impressed him deeply." I know that, in attempting to bolster up the abusive Buchanan-Maitland of 1871 against the contrite Buchanan of 1881, Tennyson's opinion has been represented to a very different purport: but Professor Palgrave's account of the matter cannot be other than true, and his statement claims acceptance as final upon this point.

P. 77.—PASSION AND WORSHIP.—The central idea of this sonnet may be thus defined: When love has passed from the stage of desire to the stage of fruition or possession, and when passion is the dominant emotion, that feeling of lowly homage which characterized the earlier stage of love still continues to subsist: it has its place, though it has become secondary to passion.

P. 81.—LOVE-SWEETNESS.—This is the sonnet which Rossetti, in his "Stealthy School of Criticism," cited as showing that, in "The House of Life," "all the passionate and just delights of the body are declared—somewhat figuratively, it is true, but unmistakably—to be as nought if not ennobled by the concurrence of the soul at all times." I presume that the figurative element of the sonnet, in its conclusion, is reasonably plain. Lest any one should say that it is not plain to him, I will add that the phrase as to the wing of the spirit which "feels the breath of kindred plumes against its feet" is to be interpreted as indicating the two loving souls, with their interchange of thought and emotion.

P. 85.—VENUS VICTRIX.—I think the charge of some obscurity may properly attach to the close of this sonnet. I understand: My Lady is in herself the co-equal of Juno, Pallas, and Venus. But to me she bears a still sweeter name, that of Helen. She is as if Venus, transforming herself into Helen, became mine.

P. 87.—THE LOVE-MOON.—It is clear that in the last line of this sonnet the name Love is applied not to any earthly passion, to emotions controlled by any "Cupid," but to Deity. "God is Love." The same, more or less expressly, may be noted in Sonnet I. of this series, and in the penultimate stanza of "The Portrait."

P. 88.—THROUGH DEATH TO LOVE.—No doubt the allusions at the close are to some passages or incidents in the Bible. Of angel-greeted doors several are recorded, and it may be difficult to say which is more particularly meant. The "wing-winnowed threshing-floor" must be that of Ornan (1 Chronicles, xxi. 15). The angel, who was stayed from destroying Jerusalem after David had numbered the people, "stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite."

P. 88.—HOPE OVERTAKEN.—The Lover, now united to his Lady,

refers here to the untoward delay which took place before the union was effected. He speaks of his "Hope," which may at starting be understood as meaning the hope that he entertained for union with the Lady; but this idea merges in the idea of the object hoped for, the Lady herself, and the imagery used develops accordingly. The next ensuing sonnet is a direct sequel to this, and the following one prolongs the theme.

P. 90.—DEATH-IN-LOVE.—In this sonnet the imagery is distinct, and the apologue is narrated unambiguously. The thing signified, however, may be less tangible, and open to some difference of interpretation. The title, "Death-in-Love," must serve as our guide. It intimates that Earthly Love partakes of the nature of Death. Death dominates and concludes Earthly Love; Love is the thrall of mortality.

P. 91.—WILLOWWOOD.—Rossetti has thus described this quatrain of sonnets, more particularly the first of them: "The sonnet describes a dream or trance of divided love momentarily re-united by the longing fancy; and in the imagery of the dream, the face of the beloved rises through deep dark waters to kiss the lover."

P. 91.—"Soul-struck widowhood," etc. I cannot but consider it a grave defect in versification that the word "willowwood" should have been treated as if it constituted a dactylic rhyme, chiming (only too imperfectly) with "widowhood" and "pillow could." Clearly, the only true rhyme-syllable is the final "wood," which, in other lines, is, with moderate correctness, rhymed with "wood" and "food."

P. 92.—LOVE'S FATALITY.—The leading idea of this sonnet appears to be as follows: Love is in himself free and happy. But Loving Desire, enchained by the necessities and prohibitions of Life, is a dismal captive, and brings Love himself into the same fetters and the same misery.

P. 93.—STILLBORN LOVE.—Briefly stated, the meaning of this sonnet stands thus: A man and a woman love, but the moment when their love might find actual fruition occurs not in this world nor in time—only in the realm of eternity. That moment is, as it were, a child which, totally secluded from them in time, hails them in eternity as its parents.

P. 93.—TRUE WOMAN.—These three sonnets were written towards September 1881, and are (I think) the latest-composed of all Dante Rossetti's published work.

P. 93.—"The heart-shaped seal of green," etc. This image will be clear to any one who has looked with ordinary attention at a snowdrop, and it needs no explanation. But it may be worth observing that shortly before the time when Rossetti wrote this sonnet he was painting the picture entitled "The Day-Dream." In that picture the flower now depicted is the honeysuckle; but it had originally been the snowdrop, and no doubt his recent careful observation of the snowdrop, for the purpose of his painting, was what prompted this image of "the heart-shaped seal of green."

P. 94.—HER HEAVEN.—The Seer, named in line 2, is Swedenborg.

P. 94.—TRANSFIGURED LIFE.—This sonnet sets forth (what Rossetti profoundly believed to be the truth concerning good poetry) that "the song"—i.e., a poem—is the "transfigured life" of its author; his essential self developed into words under the control of art. The "abundant rain" of the conclusion of the sonnet is not, I think, merely "tearful emotion," but also "fertilizing and purifying influence." Tearful emotion, however, is clearly indicated in Sonnet 61, which follows on with Sonnet 60. I suppose it can hardly be requisite to say to English readers that the "abundant rain" etc. form a Biblical allusion. After the three years' terrific drought, Elijah announced to Ahab that there was "a sound of abundance of rain." He then sent up

his servant to the top of Mount Carmel, to watch ; the servant saw " a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand," and it was followed by " a great rain" (1 Kings, ch. xviii.). The accomplished French translator of " The House of Life," Madame Clémence Couve, had evidently not perceived the allusion.

P. 95.—THE SONG-THROE.—As this is an important affirmation of Rossetti's view concerning good poetry, it may be well to note that it comes very late in his career, April 1880.

P. 95.—INCLUSIVENESS.—I question whether the word " Inclusive-ness " quite indicates to the reader what the author meant to convey in this sonnet. The uncouth word " many-sidedness," or " divergent identity," might be more apt. The gist of the sonnet—emphasized more especially in its conclusion—is that one same thing has different aspects and influences to different persons and according to different conditions.

P. 96.—KNOWN IN VAIN.—The essential point in this sonnet requires reflection rather than explanation. The idea is that of a man who in youth has been feeble in will, indolent and scattered, but who, when too late, wakes up to the duty and the privileges of work. Without insisting overmuch upon its value in an autobiographical relation, one can scarcely doubt that this sonnet was written by its author in a moment of some self-reproach—with a sense of faculties untrained and opportunities slighted. The date of the sonnet is quite early, January 1853. This was the month in which a purchaser for the oil-picture of " The Annunciation," painted and exhibited in 1850, was at length secured, and was a full year before my brother made acquaintance with Mr. Ruskin. From the date of that acquaintance his professional prospects became less uncertain ; but meanwhile there had been a period of no little dimness and anxiety, aggravated at times by a feeling that more earnest efforts ought to have been made. People who see that youthful work of his in the National British Gallery may incline to condone his laxities.

P. 96.—THE HEART OF THE NIGHT.—This sonnet, evidently a very intense personal utterance, seems to belong to something of the same mood of mind as the preceding one. It is however far later in date, 1873.

P. 98.—THE HILL SUMMIT.—In its immediate primary meaning, this sonnet manifestly describes a resplendent day nearing its close, and the poet, on a day-long journey, contemplating the sunset from a height : and I have no doubt the sonnet was a direct outcome of such an incident. On the other hand, the implied or analogous meaning is likewise intentional—that of a career which, having reached its shining culmination, has thereafter to decline into the shade, and close in the night of the tomb. A letter from my brother, September 1869, speaks of his having made a change in the sextett, whereby " the symbolism " has become more distinct than before.

P. 98.—THE CHOICE.—I need scarcely point out to the reader that in this trio of sonnets, " The Choice," three theories of human life are presented. Each of the three theories is based on one simple and irrefragable consideration, " To-morrow thou shalt die." In Sonnet 1, the deduction is " Eat and drink "—the theory of physical enjoyment. In Sonnet 2, the deduction is " Watch and fear "—the theory of religious asceticism. In Sonnet 3, the deduction is " Think and act "—the theory of self-development. These sonnets were written at a very early age, in 1848, or when the author was nineteen or twenty years of age, at a time when

" The world was all before him, where to choose."

From the tone of the sonnets it will be obvious that he gave, in anticipation, the preference to " Think and act " ; in performance he gave the same preference. But this was never because he ignored the other

two theories; he only refused them co-equal rank. It is rather curious that, when Rossetti was preparing his privately printed poems, he boggled a good deal at including "The Choice": I assured him that it ought to go in, and he consented—first relieving the sonnets of some juvenilities of expression, but leaving all their essential meaning as it stood. In his "Stealthy School of Criticism" he was able—most justly—to cite "The Choice" as express proof that he was not a member of any "Fleshly School of Poetry."

P. 99.—OLD AND NEW ART.—This trio of sonnets forms a manifesto—perhaps the best manifesto that it ever received in writing—of the Præraphæelite movement, begun in the autumn of 1848. Nos. 2 and 3, were written in 1848; No. 1, in 1849. This sonnet, "St. Luke the Painter," was intended to illustrate a picture (never painted) of St. Luke preaching, having beside him pictures, his own work, of Christ and the Virgin Mary. No. 3 was at first entitled "To the Young Painters of England, in memory of those before Raphael"—a name sufficiently savouring of the P.R.B.

P. 100.—SOUL'S BEAUTY and BODY'S BEAUTY.—These two sonnets were written respectively for Rossetti's pictures entitled "Sibylla Palmifera" and "Lilith." They embody—more especially the "Soul's Beauty"—some particulars which are strictly indicative of details to be seen in the pictures. In 1870 these sonnets were published with their original titles, among the "Sonnets for Pictures." This was not however their first appearance. They were printed in 1868, along with the sonnet "Venus Verticordia," in a pamphlet on the Royal Academy by Mr. Swinburne (I wrote a different section of the pamphlet): and thus they marked the first move towards poetic publicity which had been made by Dante Rossetti since the death of his wife.

P. 100.—BODY'S BEAUTY.—Rossetti's picture of "Lilith" represents a beautiful woman in modern dishabille, combing out her profuse golden locks. His poem of "Eden Bower" presents Lilith as a serpent who had been changed into the form of woman, and had been the wife of Adam prior to the creation of Eve. These points should be borne in mind as one reads the sonnet, "Body's Beauty." Nor should the reader forget a passage in Göthe's "Faust"—I give it as translated by Shelley. On the Walpurgis-night Mephistopheles points out to Faust

"Lilith, the first wife of Adam.

Beware of her fair hair, for she excels

All women in the magic of her locks;

And, when she winds them round a young man's neck,

She will not ever set him free again."

P. 101.—THE MONOCHORD.—Of all the sonnets in "The House of Life" this is the one which seems to me the most obscure. It was published in the "Poems" of 1870; not as forming part of "The House of Life," but as a separate sonnet, the last in the volume, with the additional heading "Written during Music." The first line stood at that time thus—"Is it the moved air or the moving sound." In that form the sonnet would naturally be understood as indicating, in very figurative language, the power of music over the human soul. The question arises—When Rossetti substituted the present opening, "Is it this sky's vast vault or ocean's sound," did he intend to retain the idea of music under a metaphor, or did he discard that idea, and truly deal with the vast influences of nature, sky and sea? I fancy the latter. If so, I understand the general purport of the sonnet to be this: There is an unspeakably mysterious bond between the universe and the soul of man (macrocosm and microcosm): the phenomena of nature search the inmost recesses of the soul, inspiring awe, administering solace.

The musical term "Monochord" is defined as "an instrument of

one string, used to ascertain and demonstrate the several lengths of the string required to produce the several notes of the musical scale." Evidently, however, the word "Monochord" is not (even in the original form of the sonnet) applied in this literal sense; it may now rather indicate the mysterious bond above-named, unifying nature and the soul.

P. 101.—FROM DAWN TO NOON.—This sonnet is not, I think, difficult; but it requires a certain amount of reflection, which may best be condensed into a free paraphrase.—When a man's thought, some act of creative or inventive thought, has attained its full development, the man remains dubious whether the tentative stage, when the thought still remained obscure to himself, or the realizing stage, when the thought assumed express and definite form, was the more important factor in the result. This is like the experience of a child now grown up, who in childhood does not analyse any of his impressions as to the persons and objects that surround him, but in adult age can recall the impressions, and can through these analyse the motive causes of them.

P. 101.—MEMORIAL THRESHOLDS.—This doorway is associated with my past life on earth: this same doorway—the events of my life related to this doorway—must fashion my fate in eternity. See, for a cognate thought, the close of Sonnet 63, "Inclusiveness."

P. 103.—VAIN VIRTUES.—The drift of this sonnet is no doubt clear enough. But it may be worth while to call attention to its double character—(1) as an ethical meditation, and (2) as an apologue, or spiritual impersonation.—(1) The ethical meditation is to the effect that the damnation or eternal condemnation of sin is not so dreadful a thing to reflect upon as the fact that a soul, sinful at last, may have been virtuous at first, and thus, when the soul is finally condemned, its virtues may be regarded as damned along with its sins.—(2) The apologue can be presented thus. A virtuous deed, the offspring of a human soul, is a fair virgin, who, were the Soul then to pass out of earthly life, would become a saint in heaven. But the Soul afterwards commits a mortal sin—links itself to Sin. The destiny of the Sin is that, when the Soul dies, she shall become the bride of the Devil: but, even while the Sin is "still blithe on earth," the fair virgin, the virtuous deed, has her prospective sainthood forfeited, and is sucked down helpless into the pit of doom.

P. 103.—DEATH'S SONGSTERS.—The application of this sonnet is not entirely clear to me. It will be observed that, except for its last two lines, the sonnet consists entirely of a reference to two acts of heroic self-discipline recorded of Ulysses. Then in the last two lines comes the application. This application, as I apprehend it, is an appeal of the poet to his own moral conscience, and relates to the question of a noble or degrading tone in the poetry which he affects, as writer or reader. Will he, like Ulysses, disregard and disdain the blandishment of the song of the Sirens, and of the wiles of Helen?

P. 104.—"Nor shames her lip the cheek of victory." "Her lip" might grammatically mean either "the lip of Death," or "the lip of Victory." I think, with some dubiety, that the former is intended.

P. 104.—RETRO ME, SATHANA!—This (as indicated in my note to p. 74) is a very early sonnet: the earliest of all those which form "The House of Life." It was written in 1847, when Rossetti was painting, under the same title, an oil-picture which did not proceed very far.

P. 105.—LOST ON BOTH SIDES.—One has to conjecture the application of this sonnet, a comparatively early one. I think it refers to my brother's aspirations for attainment as painter and as poet, partially balked as yet.

P. 106.—MICHELANGELO'S KISS.—The incident here referred to is recorded by Condivi, a scholar and biographer of Michelangelo—the "true heart" of line 4.

P. 106.—“O Buonarruoti—good at Art’s fire-wheels,” etc. Rossetti here takes the surname Buonarruoti, and assumes that it is compounded of the words “buon-a-ruote”—i.e., “good at wheels.” I think this is decidedly incorrect. The true derivation of the name Buonarruoti—or Buonarruoto, for it would be preferable to consider the name in its singular number—must be “Buon-arruoto,” which means “Good adjutant”—the primary meaning of the word “arruoto” being “addition, supplement.” According to the constitution of the Florentine Republic, the sixteen Gonfalonieri were assisted, or supplemented, by eighty citizens of the plebeian class, who had to supervise suffrages and elections, and declare their result. These eighty men were termed “Arruoti,” or Adjutants. It seems more than probable that some ancestor of Michelangelo Buonarruoti may have distinguished himself by probity in this employ, and may have hence earned the name of “Buon-arruoto,” which devolved upon his descendants.

P. 106.—THE VASE OF LIFE.—This sonnet is made up entirely of imagery, and requires a little scrutiny preparatory to our reading it off.—1, Human Life is figured as a vase sculptured with a bas-relief: the bas-relief represents a youth running a race, which he wins, and stands crowned. 2, A certain person, whom we may regard as a man rich in faculty and bold in enterprise—a man of genius—does not, like other less finely-endowed men, creep around this vase; but turns it from side to side, and masters its imaged significance. 3, He fills it with the rapid and ardent experiences of his career, and it is finally to receive his own ashes.—These are the principal contents of the sonnet: some details are rather obscurely expressed.—I never knew whether my brother was thinking of some particular “man of genius” when he wrote this sonnet: but have always suspected that he had in his eye his own early colleague in the race of life and of art, the illustrious painter Sir John Millais.

P. 106.—

“And he has filled this vase with wine for blood,
With blood for tears, with spice for burning vow,
With watered flowers for buried love most fit.”

The use of the word “for” in these lines is not quite clear to me. In the first line “for” appears to mean “instead of,” and so perhaps in the earlier instance in the second line: wine instead of blood, and blood instead of tears. The next “for” appears to mean “on account of,” or “by way of”: spice by way of burnt-offering. In the last line “for” has its natural primary sense, following the adjective “fit.”

P. 107.—A SUPERSCRPTION.—The subject of this sonnet is “the Sense of Loss.” Chiefly, the sense of loss in the death of one supremely beloved would be referred to; but we should not wholly exclude from the purview the sense of loss in any lost opportunity, any duty irrecoverably neglected, and the like (compare Sonnet 86, “Lost Days”). In the present sonnet the Sense of Loss is spoken of as remaining comparatively dull and passive, under the ordinary conditions of life; but as re-asserting itself with direful force at moments when the soul feels beguiled into happiness or contentment. Then comes the re-action—the feeling of what “might have been”—the ache of unforgiving memory.

P. 107.—HE AND I.—People, I fancy, have often “given up” this sonnet as an insoluble riddle: and yet its meaning appears to me very plain, when one analyses it. The sonnet, I consider, exhibits the dismal surprise with which a man finds that he is no longer himself, and yet is himself. He used to be youthful and buoyant: how is it that he is now ageing and dejected? I offer a paraphrase.

Whence came his feet [the feet of this new and melancholy occupant] into my field [of life], and why? How is it that he sees all so

dear? How do I see his seeing (i.e., How do I see some object—any and every object—under the same aspect in which he sees it?) and how do I hear it named or designated accordingly, although he, in his bitter silence, leaves it unnamed? This was the little fold of separate sky whose pasturing clouds, within the soul's atmosphere, drew living light from one continual year. How should he find it lifeless? Is it he who finds it lifeless, or is it I? Lo, this new Self now wanders round my field, with plaints for every flower, and for each tree a moan, the sighing wind's auxiliary; and he weeps over sweet waters of my life, which yield to his lips no draught save only tears unsealed—even in my place he weeps. He? No, I—not he.

P. 107.—**NEWBORN DEATH** (1).—This is the utterance of a man who feels himself growing old, or for some other reason nearing the close of his career. My brother never grew old; he wrote the verses in December 1868, when his age was forty. Death is figured as the child of Life. The child is as yet an infant—it is only incipient Death: Life sets it to dally with the man, so that they two may familiarize themselves one with the other before they depart together from this world. When the moment for departure comes, will Death be still a mere child, or will she be full-grown, and welcome to the man like a helpful daughter? In other words—is he to die soon, or only after a long interval of decadence, by the end of which he shall wish for death?

P. 108.—**THE ONE HOPE**.—This final sonnet seems to me clear. Still, the imagery is a little complex, and may bear some words of exposition. The poet first asks himself the question: "When I die, the puppet to the last of desire and regret, how will my soul stand in relation to these feelings?" He looks forward to final peace of soul—not annihilation; but he queries whether this peace will be attained soon, or after long delay. Then comes (occupying the residue of the sonnet) the image under which he figures the possibility of an early attainment of peace. He imagines the Soul, in its new condition, stooping "through the spray of some sweet life-fountain," and culling a flower inscribed (as the Greek fancy assumed the hyacinth to be inscribed) with some lettering, indicating what is to be the boon accorded to the Soul as its portion in eternity. What he longs to find inscribed upon the flower is "the one Hope's one name"—that is, the name of the woman supremely beloved upon earth. It surprises me that two translators—Madame Clémence Couve for French, and Herr Otto Hauser for German—should have been wholly abroad as to this meaning of "The one Hope"—they translate as if mere hope, the simple emotion or the theological virtue, were intended.

P. 109.—**EDEN BOWER**.—I suppose that the ancient legend of Lilith, the first wife of Adam before the creation of Eve, is sufficiently present to readers to enable them to understand the structure and imagery of this ballad.

P. 114.—**THE STREAM'S SECRET**.—This poem was written partly at Penkill, in 1869, and mostly in Sussex (Scalands, a house belonging to Mrs. Bodichon) in March 1870. The stream is (as Mr. William Sharp has recorded) "the brown-pooled, birch-banked Penwhapple in Ayrshire, that gurgles and lapses from slope to slope till it reaches Girvan Water." Hard by is a cave named Bennan's Cave, after a covenant of the seventeenth century; here some of the verses were written down. The rhythmical arrangement of this poem is, I presume, my brother's own. After the first experimental years of youth were past, he was opposed to innovations in rhythm and metre; thinking that the established and recognized forms are generally the best. In the present instance, however, I conceive that he made a very successful essay.

P. 119.—**ROSE MARY**.—In a letter Rossetti called it "a story of my own; good, I think, turning of course on the innocence required in

the seer." This poem was written in the early autumn of 1871. The "Beryl-songs" are a later addition, say 1879. The very general opinion has been that they were better away; I cannot but agree with it, and indeed the author did so eventually. I have heard my brother say that he wrote them to show that he was not incapable of the daring rhyming and rhythmical exploits of some other poets. As to this point readers must judge. It is at any rate true that in making the word "Beryl" the pivot of his experiment, a word to which there are the fewest possible rhymes, my brother weighted himself heavily. Also the "Beryl-songs" have a certain semi-tangible impressiveness, which tends to elevate the calibre of the poem as a whole.

P. 131.—"With him thy lover 'neath Hell's cloud-cover to fly." The reader of Dante will readily perceive that this passage implies a reference to the Hell-circle of Paolo and Francesca.

P. 138.—THE WHITE SHIP.—This is the first of two important historical ballads written by Dante Rossetti, the second being "The King's Tragedy." He projected later on writing one upon Joan of Arc, but barely a few lines of this are extant. "The White Ship" was composed mostly in 1880, ending towards the close of April: some scraps of it dated "long before." I have always regarded this ballad as second to nothing that my brother produced. "Every incident," as he said in a letter, "including that of the boy at the end, is given in one or other account of the event." Mr. Hall Caine has supplied the following particulars:—"Dinner being now over, I asked Rossetti to redeem his promise to read one of his new ballads. He responded readily, and, taking a small manuscript volume out of a section of the bookcase that had been locked, read us *The White Ship*. It seemed to me that I never heard anything at all matchable with Rossetti's elocution. His rich deep voice lent an added music to the music of the verse. It rose and fell, in the passages descriptive of the wreck, with something of the surge and sibilation of the sea itself. In the tenderer passages it was soft as a woman's, and in the pathetic stanzas with which the ballad closes it was profoundly moving." To this account I may add that my brother's reading of poetry, his own or that of others, had a certain tendency to the "intoning" quality (and so had Tennyson's reading, in a higher degree), giving a wholeness to the entire composition, and bringing out the rhythmical sequence. It did not ignore the dramatic element in the subject, the play of dialogue, etc.: but he was quite alien from anything partaking of stage-effect in reading. I can recollect his once reading out, many years earlier, at the request of Mrs. Dallas-Glyn the actress, some short passage from Shakespeare; and her bantering reference to his un-actor-like delivery of it. To him a poem was always, first and foremost, a poem: its light and shade were important, but its detachable "nuances" were left in strict subordination.

P. 145.—THE KING'S TRAGEDY.—The poem by James I. of Scotland, "The King's Quair," and the history of this sovereign, were not known to Rossetti in his earlier years. His first detailed acquaintance with them may have dated in 1868, when he saw, in Penkill Castle, Ayrshire, the series of wall-paintings from the poem done by William Bell Scott. After that (as is traceable in this ballad), the virtues of the King in vindicating the common people against oppression, and his interesting combination of poetry with kingship, took a strong hold upon my brother's feelings, resulting in the ballad, which was completed early in 1881. He thought it "really a success." The work was composed with much tension of feeling, and he said to Mr. Caine, "It was as though my own life ebbed out with it."

P. 165.—MY SISTER'S SLEEP.—This is a very early performance; still earlier, I apprehend, than "The Blessed Damozel." It was first published in "The Germ," 1850; and was there intended to commence a series, "Songs of One Household," but no other member of that

series was written. Later on Rossetti regarded this poem with more than due disfavour; and he would probably have omitted it from the volume of 1870, but for the fact that Mr. Harry Buxton Forman, writing an article in *Tinsley's Magazine*, had spoken of it, and this with high praise. My brother, therefore, thinking that it would get about in its original form, altered it not a little, and printed it. In my opinion it should not under any conditions have been excluded. The poem is written with an air of truth-telling; and I have sometimes found that readers suppose it to record a real death in the family. This is an error—the composition having no relation to actual fact.

P. 166.—FOR AN ANNUNCIATION, EARLY GERMAN.—This is an early sonnet, 1847—the first of all his “Sonnets on Pictures.” My brother saw the painting in an auction-room.

P. 167.—AVE.—Of all Rossetti's poems, this is the one which seems most to indicate definite Christian belief, and of a strongly Roman Catholic kind. Such an inference would, however, be erroneous; his training was not in the Roman but the Anglican Church, and by the time when he wrote “Ave” he was more than vague in point of religious faith. That time was very early, 1847: “Ave” was no doubt one of the compositions which—under the general designation of “Songs of the Art Catholic”—he sent at a venture to William Bell Scott in Newcastle-on-Tyne in November of that year. As to this designation I have expressed myself elsewhere as follows:—“By ‘Art’ he decidedly meant something more than ‘poetic art.’ He meant to suggest that the poems embodied conceptions and a point of view related to pictorial art—also that this art was, in sentiment though not necessarily in dogma, Catholic—mediæval and unmodern.” When in 1869 my brother got his poems privately printed, as a convenient preliminary before settling for publication, he put a note to “Ave” thus: “This hymn was written as a prologue to a series of designs. Art still identifies herself with all faiths for her own purposes: and the emotional influence here employed demands above all an inner standing-point.” Indeed he rather hesitated about including “Ave” in his collection; but very properly decided upon doing so. The poem, from its first draft to its published form in 1870, was subjected to a great deal of alteration. In its first shape it was named “Mater Pulchræ Delectionis,” and ran as follows:—

MATER PULCHRÆ DELECTIONIS

“Mother of the fair delight,
From the azure standing white
And looking golden in the light;—
With the shadow of the Heaven-roof
Upon thy hands lifted aloof,
And a mystic quiet in thine eyes
Born of the hush of Paradise,
Seated beside the Ancient Three,
Thyself a woman-Trinity—
Being the dear daughter of God,
Mother of Christ from stall to rood,
And wife unto the Holy Ghost;—
Oh, when our need is uttermost,
And the sorrow we have seemeth to last,—
Though the future falls not to the past
In the race that the Great Cycle runs,
Bethink thee of that olden once
Wherein to such as death may strike
Thou wert a sister, sisterlike.
Yea, even thou, who reignest now
Where the Angels are they that bow,—

Thou, hardly to be looked upon
 By saints whose steps tread thro' the Sun,—
 Thou, the most greenly jubilant
 Of the leaves of the Threefold Plant,—
 Headstone of this humanity,
 Groundstone of the great Mystery,
 Fashioned like us, yet more than we.

I think that at the furthest top
 My love just sees thee standing up
 Where the light of the Throne is bright;
 Unto the left, unto the right,
 The cherubim, order'd and join'd,
 Slope inward to a golden point,
 And from between the seraphim
 The glory cometh like a hymn.
 All is aquiet,—nothing stirs;
 The peace of nineteen hundred years
 Is within thee and without thee;
 And the Godshine falls about thee;
 And thy face looks from thy veil
 Sweetly and solemnly and well,
 Like to a thought of Raphaël.

Oh, if that look can stoop so far,
 Let it reach down from star to star
 And try to see us where we are;
 For the griefs we weep came like swift death,
 But the slow comfort loitereth.
 Sometimes it even seems to us
 That we are overbold when thus
 We cry and hope we shall be heard;—
 Being much less than a short word,—
 Mere shadow that abideth not,—
 Dusty nothing, soon forgot.
 O Lady Mary, be not loth
 To listen,—thou whom the stars clothe!
 Bend thine ear, and pour back thine hair,
 And let our voice come to thee there
 Where, seeing, thou mayst not be seen;
 Help us a little, Mary Queen!
 Into the shadow thrust thy face,
 Bowing thee from the glory-place,
 Saint Mary the Virgin, full of grace!"

P. 167.—"The sea Sighed further off eternally." When the privately-printed volume was preparing I pointed out to my brother that this would not quite do, as there is no sea at all near Nazareth. His reply was highly characteristic: "I fear the sea must remain at Nazareth: you know an old painter would have made no bones if he wanted it for his background."

P. 168.—"Or washed thy garments in the stream." In 1855 Rossetti painted "The Annunciation," in a water-colour, from this point of view: Mary steeping her clothes in a rivulet, and the announcing angel upright between two trees.

P. 168.—"When the twilight gone Left darkness in the house of John." This also was treated in a water-colour, one of Rossetti's best,—named "The House of John"—1858. It is now, I believe, in America.

P. 169.—THE PORTRAIT.—In printed notices of my brother's poems I have often seen the supposition advanced that this poem was written after the death of his wife, in relation to some portrait he had painted

of her during her lifetime. The supposition is very natural—yet not correct. The poem was in fact an extremely early one, and purely imaginary,—in the first draft of it, as early as 1847; it was afterwards considerably revised.

The first draft was entitled "On Mary's Portrait, which I painted six years ago." The "six years ago" would be 1841, when Rossetti was aged thirteen, and there was no "Mary." One stanza from this early endeavour may be quoted here:—

"So, along some grass bank in heaven
 Mary the Virgin, going by
 Seeth her servant Raphaël
 Laid in warm silence happily;
 Being but a little lovelier
 Since he hath reached the eternal year.
 She smiles: and he, as though she spoke,
 Feels thanked, and from his lifted toque
 His curls fall as he bends to her."

P. 171.—FOR OUR LADY OF THE ROCKS, by Leonardo da Vinci.—Several years ago, towards 1890, Mr. W. M. Hardinge published in "Temple Bar" an interesting and thoughtful article "On the Louvre Sonnets of Rossetti," including this one on the Leonardo. There is a slight mistake here; for, in fact, the sonnet does not relate to the picture in the Louvre, but to the nearly similar one now in the National Gallery. Rossetti wrote it "in front of the picture in the British Institution many years ago"—i.e., many years before 1869. Mr. Hardinge most truly observes that the real and manifest subject of the picture is the infant Jesus blessing the infant John Baptist; and that the ulterior mystical interpretation put upon it by Rossetti ("the Shadow of Death—Blesses the dead," etc.) is Rossetti's affair, and not Leonardo's. Not indeed that Mr. Hardinge aims to undervalue this camera-obscure exercise of Rossetti's transmuting imagination—far from that. He points to it as symptomatic and observable.

P. 171.—"Whose peace abides," etc. It may be questioned whether the antecedent of "Whose" is "Lord," or "each spirit." Mr. Hardinge thought the former: I queried it at the time, but acknowledged that he may be right.

P. 171.—AT THE SUN-RISE IN 1848.—We have here one of Rossetti's few compositions bearing upon national or political matters. It shows that he shared the aspirations and exultations of the year of vast European upheavals.

P. 172.—AUTUMN SONG.—This lyric was set to music by Mr. Edward Dannreuther during my brother's lifetime, and was published in that form—perhaps not otherwise. It is the utterance of a dreamy or indeed morbid mood of desolation to which the youth of our modern generations is prone. With my brother, at the moment of composition (September 1848), it was even a factitious mood; for, in sending this lyric to our mother, he termed it "a howling canticle," and declared that, "if snobbishness consists in the assumption of false appearances, the most snobbish of all things is poetry." At that date the verses were entitled "The Fall of the Leaf."

P. 172.—THE LADY'S LAMENT.—Remained unpublished during Rossetti's lifetime. It is of much the same tone as the preceding item, and was written in the same month.

P. 173.—MARY'S GIRLHOOD.—The picture to which these sonnets relate was (apart from two portraits) the first oil-painting, 1848-49, completed by my brother. The concluding lines of sonnet 1, "She woke in her white bed," etc., have a more direct connection, however, with his second picture, "The Annunciation" (or *Ecce Ancilla Domini*) now in the National British Gallery. Sonnet 2 was inscribed by my brother on the frame of his first picture: he never published it other-

wise. Of the picture itself, Rossetti entertained in after-years an opinion by no means unfavourable. He got it back for re-framing in 1864, and found it "a long way better than he thought." He wrote further—"It quite surprised me (and shamed me a little) to see what I did fifteen years ago." At a much earlier date he wrote with truth: "My religious subjects have been entirely independent in treatment of any other corresponding representation, and indeed altogether original in the inventions."

P. 174.—THE CARD-DEALER.—This was first published in *The Athenæum* of October 23, 1852, in a form not identical with the present. It was stated to be "From a Picture"; and a note set forth that—"The picture is one painted by the late Theodore von Holst; and represents a beautiful woman, richly dressed, who is sitting at a lamp-lit table, dealing out cards, with a peculiar fixedness of expression." The poem was then named "The Card-dealer, or Vingt-et-un," and it contained some phrases applicable to the second title. Like "Sister Helen," it bore the signature "H.H.H."

P. 175.—VOX ECCLESIAE, VOX CHRISTI.—Written in 1849. My brother wrote it to serve as a pendant to a sonnet of my own composition which was published in "The Germ," under the vague title "The Evil under the Sun" ("How long, O Lord," etc.). That title was vamped up to appease the publisher's nervousness; the sonnet being in fact written by me as a sorrowful commemoration of the collapse—the temporary collapse, as we now know it to have been—of various revolutionary movements in Europe, especially that of Hungary. My own title for the sonnet was "On the General Oppression of the Better by the Worse Cause, October 1849." The sonnet has of late years more than once been republished, finally under the title "Democracy Downtrodden." I mention these facts solely in order to bring out the more clearly the precise point of view which marks my brother's sonnet.

P. 175.—ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS.—This sonnet refers to the apathy with which other countries witnessed the national struggles of Italy and Hungary against Austria. When Rossetti was getting the sonnet printed in 1869, he asked me whether I should be in favour of altering the title thus—"On the Refusal of Aid to Hungary 1849, to Poland 1861, to Crete 1867." It is odd that he failed to name Italy: this I can only regard as an oversight having no significance. He certainly condemned the refusal in the case of Italy at least as much as in other cases: though the old watch-word, "L'Italia farà da sé," may have been attractive to him in the abstract.

P. 176.—A TRIP TO PARIS AND BELGIUM.—In the autumn of 1849 my brother undertook this trip along with Mr. Holman Hunt (see the note to "World's Worth"). He wrote the verses mostly while actually travelling by rail, etc., and sent them in his letters to me. The sonnet, "Place de la Bastille, Paris" (p. 179), belongs to this series; it is the only one of the set which my brother published in one of his volumes ("Ballads and Sonnets"). I hardly know what amount of poetry may by this time have been written, recording the aspects of railway-travelling. This blank-verse "Trip" must have ranked among the early ones, and I suppose it would still be among the best. This is rather curious, as Dante Rossetti was so very little of a traveller, whether by rail or in any other way.

P. 179.—THE STAIRCASE OF NOTRE DAME, PARIS.—As this sonnet was written in 1849, it bears some trace of the problems of that period, succeeding the great year of European revolution, 1848.

P. 180.—SONNET TO THE P.R.B.—The reference here to Mr. Woolner seems to imply that he was culpably lazy as a sculptor. This is a joke. He was not lazy; but, having no commissions, nor definite prospect of such, he was often unoccupied in those days.

P. 181.—LAST VISIT TO THE LOUVRE.—The reader must make some allowance for the irrational excess of early P.R.B. opinion evident in this sonnet. My brother wrote as he then, in essentials, thought: but he was no doubt conscious that he clothed his thought in terms of burlesque exaggeration.

P. 181.—LAST SONNETS AT PARIS.—These sonnets, in respect of their comparison of things French with things English, are as irrational, and consciously so, as the preceding one. But it is true that Dante Rossetti was, and not only in 1849, a good deal of a John Bull in sentiment. The companionship of Mr. Holman Hunt did not tend to attenuate any feelings of this kind.

P. 185.—ON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO.—In sending this sonnet in a letter to me, October 18, 1849, my brother wrote: "One of the great nuisances at this place [Brussels], as also at Waterloo, is the plague of guides, from which there is no escape. The one we had at Waterloo completely baulked me of all the sonnets I had promised myself, so that all I accomplished was the embryo bottled up in the preceding column. Between you and me, William, Waterloo is simply a bore." This is a petulant outburst, not representing my brother's real sense as to the important issues brought to the test at Waterloo.

P. 188.—FOR A VENETIAN PASTORAL, by Giorgione.—This sonnet was published in "The Germ," terminating thus—

"Nor name this ever. Be it as it was,—
Silence of heat and solemn poetry."

I liked that conclusion, and wrote so to my brother when he was putting the sonnet, with the last line as now altered, into his privately printed poems. He replied as follows, and I think very rightly so as regards the general principle involved:—"I remember you expressed a preference once before for the old line, which seems to me quite bad. 'Solemn poetry' belongs to the class of phrase absolutely forbidden, I think, in poetry. It is intellectually incestuous—poetry seeking to beget its emotional offspring on its own identity. Whereas I see nothing too 'ideal' in the present line. It gives only the momentary contact with the immortal which results from sensuous culmination, and is always a half-conscious element of it." Taking the couplet as it now stands, I understand "Nor name this ever"—to mean "Nor name this picture ever,"—be contented with the vague designation of it always hitherto current: and therefore the picture itself is termed "Life touching lips with Immortality." Mr. W. M. Hardinge, however, considers that the "Life touching lips" etc. applies to the moment of sated enjoyment which the personages in the picture have attained to.

P. 188.—FOR AN ALLEGORICAL DANCE OF WOMEN, by Andrea Mantegna.—This picture is entitled "Le Parnasse," and represents beyond a doubt the Muses (or other Deities) dancing to the music of Apollo, while Vulcan is at his forge. Rossetti appears not to have been aware that the picture bore a definite title, settling its meaning fairly enough; for he wrote in "The Germ"—"It is necessary to mention that this picture appears to have been, in the artist's mind, an allegory, which the modern spectator may seek vainly to interpret." Then, starting from this idea of a quasi-allegory not readily interpretable, he says in the sonnet that the emotion of the artist, which produced the picture, is manifest, but not the particular thought which governed it.

P. 189.—FOR RUGGIERO AND ANGELICA, by Ingres.—Few of Rossetti's sonnets have been more popular than these, written in 1849, and published in "The Germ." He knew that this had been and would be the case; and wrote in 1869—"I still have rather a grudge . . . to the two on Ingres's picture, which are merely picturesque, and which stupid people are sure to like better than better things."

P. 189.—“Now the Dead Thing,” etc. When Rossetti wrote this he had forgotten his *Ariosto*. The sea-monster does not become a “dead thing” through the prowess of Ruggiero. The latter, after a certain amount of fighting with the monster, stuns him with the intolerable glare of his magic shield, and the monster survives to be afterwards exterminated by Roland.

P. 190.—FOR A VIRGIN AND CHILD, by Hans Memmelinck.—Rossetti wrote on October 25, 1849: “The Royal Academy here [at Bruges] possesses also some most stupendous works of Memling—among them one of a Virgin and Child, quite astounding.”

P. 190.—FOR A MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE, by the same.—Speaking of the triptych which includes this composition, my brother wrote:—“I assure you that the perfection of character and even drawing, the astounding finish, the glory of colour, and above all the pure religious sentiment and ecstatic poetry, of these works, is not to be conceived or described. . . . The mind is at first bewildered by such Godlike completeness.” These are very strong expressions, testifying to the early “Præraphælite” enthusiasm: but Rossetti’s admiration of Memling always continued vivid.

P. 191.—WORLD’S WORTH.—This is one of the rather numerous pieces which Rossetti wrote in the autumn of 1849, during his short French and Belgian trip with Mr. Holman Hunt. It was first published in “The Germ,” with the title “Pax Vobis”—a version not identical with the present one.

P. 192.—SACRAMENT HYMN.—This poem, so little consonant with the tone of other poems by Rossetti, was spoken of by him thus in a letter which he addressed to William Allingham on November 22, 1860: “I never meant, I believe, to print the hymn; which was written merely to see if I could do Wesley, and copied, I believe, to enrage my friends.”

P. 193.—DENNIS SHAND.—Rossetti included “Dennis Shand” in his privately printed volume 1869, but he withheld it from publication, from a motive which he expressed thus in a letter addressed to Mr. Hall Caine in 1880:—“It deals trivially with a base amour (it was written very early), and is therefore really reprehensible to some extent.” When I was compiling the “Collected Works” of Dante Rossetti in 1886 I thought it right to conform to his decision, and I too omitted this piece. But it appears to me that, as time goes on, and as more and more of a directly literary interest attaches to an author’s productions, the force of any such consideration wanes not a little; and I therefore now treat “Dennis Shand” like other compositions, and consign it to the public verdict. If the public agree with me, they will say that the “reprehensible” quality in the ballad, though not absolutely “nil,” is really slight; and that Rossetti’s action in withholding it, while commendable on the ground of dignity and scrupulosity, went beyond any positive requirement in the case. If he had in fact been a member of a “Fleshly School” of Poetry or of Poets, he would have “made no bones” of publishing “Dennis Shand.” His preference would have been in the direction of publication.

P. 194.—THE MIRROR.—My brother never published this snatch of verse, but he had a certain liking for it. I believe some people have found its meaning obscure. I have no doubt that its purport is this:—A man is in love with a woman, without declaring himself, and without her appreciating the fact. This state of things he assimilates to the case of a man who might see several persons reflected in a mirror, and might suppose one of them, obscurely discerned, to be himself; but, making a movement, and finding that that reflected figure makes no similar movement, he knows that he must look elsewhere for a response.

P. 195.—A YOUNG FIR-WOOD.—A MS. of these verses is marked by my brother, “Between Ightham and Sevenoaks, November 1850.”

He had gone to that neighbourhood to paint a landscape-background for a picture which, left uncompleted for several years, was in 1872 finished and named "The Bower Meadow."

P. 195.—DURING MUSIC.—Written in 1851. I do not know to whom the verses were addressed: not I think Miss Siddal, who had small or no skill in music.

P. 196.—WELLINGTON'S FUNERAL.—In one of my brother's jotting-books I find the following entry: "When printing in 1870, I omitted the piece on Wellington's Funeral as referring to so recent a date; but year by year such themes become more dateless, and rank only with immortal things." He published it in 1881.

P. 196.—"Be no word Raised of bloodshed Christ-aborred." The sentiment in this stanza is much the same as in something written by Wordsworth on the Battle of Waterloo. It may be a reminiscence—or perhaps only a coincidence.

P. 197.—SONNET TO THOMAS WOOLNER.—At this date, February 1853, Woolner was in Australia, having quitted England in July 1852.

P. 198.—THE CHURCH-PORCHES.—The first of these two sonnets was published by my brother in the volume "Ballads and Sonnets." He never published the second; but this was done soon after his death. The sonnets were addressed, No. 1 to our sister Maria and No. 2 to Christina. My brother accompanied one or other to an Anglican church occasionally towards 1853. The sonnets might seem to relate to an ancient and stately Roman Catholic Church, but, so far as this goes, the terms can only be regarded as ideal.

P. 200.—ON THE SITE OF A MULBERRY TREE, ETC.—My brother never published this sonnet except in "The Academy" for February 15, 1871. In the last line he substituted (in MS.) the word "Starveling's" for "tailor's"; and I remember he once told me that his real reason for not publishing the sonnet in either of his volumes was to avoid hurting the feelings of some sensitive member or members of the tailoring craft who might dislike the line in its original wording. This point is referred to in a letter addressed by my brother to Mr. Hall Caine, and published in that gentleman's "Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti." The phrase applied to Shakespear, "The world's enfranchised son, Who found the trees of Life and Knowledge one," has always appeared to me a felicitous and comprehensive laconism.

P. 205.—DAWN ON THE NIGHT-JOURNEY.—Dante Rossetti was not addicted to night (nor even to day) journeys. In the present instance he speaks of "beyond the hills upon the sea": so the sonnet may perhaps apply to his return to England from France in September 1855, after he had been a few days in Paris with Miss Siddal, then on her way to Nice for health's sake. I regard this sonnet as a good one: my brother did not publish it—possibly because the rhyme-structure is somewhat defective, as having the rhyme "past" etc. in the sextett as well as the octave.

P. 205.—THE WOODSPURGE.—This "occasional poem" expresses, I have no doubt, some actual moment, in my brother's life, of distressful experience and harrowing thought. I do not know what it may have been—perhaps some crisis of Miss Siddal's ill-health.

P. 205.—AFTER THE FRENCH LIBERATION OF ITALY.—This sonnet was written in 1859, after Napoleon III., seconded by the Piedmontese army, had expelled the Austrians from Lombardy, and had concluded the peace of Villafranca, whereby Venetia was left unenfranchised from the Austrian yoke, and all the rest of Italy had to shift for itself as best it might, while France secured Savoy and Nice, and garrisoned the Pope in Rome. Rossetti had of course no objection—quite the contrary—to Napoleon's action in liberating Lombardy: but he objected to the other features of his Italian policy, and wrote this sonnet to commemorate his forecast of bad times for Europe generally. The sonnet was printed in 1869, along with the privately printed poems,

but it was not published until 1904; the reason for withholding it being, not anything involved in its real subject-matter, but the strong form of imagery and words in which this is clothed.

P. 206.—EVEN SO.—To the third stanza in this lyric, Mr. Coventry Patmore has awarded high praise, saying that it “seems scratched with an adamantine pen upon a slab of agate.” He coupled the praise however with an observation that “in Rossetti, as in several other modern poets of great reputations, we are constantly being pulled up, in the professedly fiery course of a tale of passion, to observe the moss on a rock or the note of a chaffinch.” I never could perceive the relevance of this objection, so far as Rossetti is concerned. To me it seems that there are very few passages of that kind in his poems. I should be curious to see a list of all such that could be picked out, but have never been at the pains of compiling one.

P. 208.—ON CERTAIN ELIZABETHAN REVIVALS.—I am not sure as to the date of this sonnet—perhaps towards 1860—nor as to the particular Elizabethan plays which had been revived on the stage. In early years—say 1848 to 1850—my brother often went to Sadler’s Wells Theatre under Phelps’s management, and witnessed and enjoyed the acting of such tragedies as Webster’s “Duchess of Malfi.” The sonnet would not apply to any drama of so high a rank as that.

P. 208.—DANTIS TENEBRÆ.—Possibly no explanation of this sonnet is needed: but, lest some reader should say that it is not intelligible, I may observe that the general purport of it is that our father Gabriele Rossetti was a diligent explorer of Dante’s writings, and that Dante Gabriel Rossetti became the like. Our father, it is true, hunted for inner and covert significances, which my brother was far from doing: he looked to the *primâ facie* meaning of the works, and their poetic glory. Gabriele Rossetti died in 1854: the date of this sonnet is more like 1861.

P. 209.—THE SEED OF DAVID.—These lines form a concise explanation of the dominant intention in Rossetti’s picture, painted for the reredos of Llandaff Cathedral. He wished to have them inscribed on the stone-work round the picture, a triptych, but I doubt whether this has been done. The lines appear to be the first that he wrote after his wife’s death in 1862.

P. 209.—ASPECTA MEDUSA.—The drawing was intended to be carried out as a picture, and was even commissioned as such, but the project failed.

P. 210.—THE PASSOVER IN THE HOLY FAMILY.—The design was produced in 1855, and purchased by Mr. Ruskin when only partially completed. In that state it remained—highly valued by Ruskin, in whose possession it continued up to his death. The design re-appears in a stained glass window, the work of Mr. F. J. Hildes, in Birchington Church, as a memorial to Rossetti, who lies interred in the churchyard. The subject of the design had been fixed upon as far back as 1849. It was projected as a portion of a triptych: one of the other subjects being “The Virgin planting a Lily and a Rose,” and the second “Mary in the House of John.” The latter alone was painted.

P. 211.—A SEA-SPELL (for a Picture).—The sonnet, without the picture, may seem somewhat obscure. The idea is that of a Siren, or Sea-Fairy, seated in a tree, whose lute summons a sea-bird to listen, and whose song will soon prove fatal to some fascinated mariner.

P. 212.—ENGLISH MAY.—This sonnet was not published in Rossetti’s lifetime.

P. 214.—MARY MAGDALENE.—The design was projected or begun in 1853, finished in 1858: Ruskin wrote of it as “magnificent to my mind in every possible way.”

P. 214.—MICHAEL SCOTT’S WOOING.—My brother made two or three drawings of this subject of invention, diverse in composition. He contemplated carrying out the subject in a large picture, which was

never executed; I am not certain whether a water-colour of it was produced or not. He took some pains over the wording of the illustrative verse, but never published it. See also the prose narrative under the same title, p. 616.

P. 214.—TROY TOWN.—My brother, upon writing this ballad in 1869, called it "my best, I think." But he, like other poets, was rather prone to fancying, at the first blush, that the last performance was the best. The legend—that Helen dedicated to Venus a cup moulded upon her breast—is an ancient one.

P. 217.—AFTER THE GERMAN SUBJUGATION OF FRANCE.—This energetic sonnet, a sequel to the one upon the French Liberation of Italy, was first published at the same date, 1904.

P. 218.—DOWN STREAM.—This was written in a punt on the Thames (near Kelmscott) in 1871, and was at first called "The River's Record." Madox Brown was asked to produce a design for a magazine named *The Dark Blue*, to serve as an illustration for something to be got out of my brother: so the latter, though not enamoured of magazines of a consumptive habit, consented to the insertion of this ballad. Writing to our mother, Dante Rossetti said: "I doubt not you will note the intention to make the first half of each verse, expressing the landscape, tally with the second expressing the emotion, even to repetition of phrases."

P. 219.—THE CLOUD CONFINES.—Rossetti wrote this poem (in 1871) in a highly serious mood of mind: he intended it to be a definite expression of his conceptions, indefinite as they were, upon problems which no amount of knowledge and experience can make other than mysterious and unfathomable. In writing to me he said that the lyric was "not meant to be a trifle"; and he consulted me as to whether it might be better to leave the last four lines as they stand, or to substitute other lines "on the theory hardly of annihilation but of absorption." He also wrote to Mr. W. Bell Scott in the same connexion, saying: "I cannot suppose that any particle of life is 'extinguished,' though its permanent individuality may be more than questionable. Absorption is not annihilation; and it is even a real retributive future for the special atom of life to be re-embodied (if so it were) in a world which its own former identity had helped to fashion for pain or pleasure." Franz Hueffer, who edited the Tauchnitz Edition of Rossetti's "Ballads and Sonnets," thought "The Cloud Confines" "his highest effort in the field of contemplative, not to say philosophic verse."

P. 220.—SUNSET WINGS.—This is one of the poems which show that my brother could take note of the appearances in nature when he chose and when they interested him. As usual, he at the end of the verses makes the appearance subserve an emotional purpose. The poem was written in August 1871, at Kelmscott Manorhouse, Oxfordshire. "It embodies," (as he wrote in a letter) "a habit of the starlings which quite amounts to a local phenomenon, and is most beautiful and interesting daily towards sunset for months together in summer and autumn."

P. 221.—SOOTHSAY.—Three verses of "Soothsay" (at first entitled "Commandments") came into Rossetti's head during a walk at Kelmscott in 1871: most of the poem was however much later, 1880-81. Mr. Walter Pater has written: "One monumental lyrical piece, 'Soothsay,' testifies—more clearly even than the 'Nineveh'—to the reflective force, the dry reason, always at work behind his imaginative creations, which at no time dispensed with a genuine intellectual structure." Some further trace of this Poem will be found among the "Versicles and Fragments."

P. 221.—"Let thy soul strive," etc. This stanza on early friendship not ultimately maintained is worthy of note in relation to Rossetti's career. Most of his early friendships were severed: some indeed

by death, but others by the course of events. In more books than one I see the blame laid constantly on my brother. In certain instances this is just: not by any means in all, as I think I have shown in my *Memoir of him*, prefixed to his *Family letters*.

P. 222.—“To God at best,” etc. This thought, or it might rather be said this emotion, was often present to Dante Rossetti. He has worded it very tersely in a fragment—

“Would God I knew there were a God to thank
When thanks rise in me!”

P. 223.—*UNTIMELY LOST*—Oliver Madox Brown.—It is perhaps needless to say that Oliver was the son of Ford Madox Brown; and, in his brief life of less than twenty years, had given promise of exceptionally good work as both painter and novelist, and in some degree as poet.

P. 224.—“This hour like a flower expands.” Reverberation of sound, such as this, is very frequent in Rossetti’s poems—as the reader of them will not proceed far without observing. He was fond of the chiming—perhaps overmuch so.

P. 225.—*THREE SHADOWS*.—This lyric has been rather frequently set to music—more frequently, I think, than any other poem by its author. The next in order might be “*Love-Lily*.”

P. 227.—*CHIMES*.—Some readers, it appears, vote this poem unintelligible, and others trivial. It may, however, less censoriously, be regarded from two points of view. 1, It is clearly an exercise in alliterative verse: if several l’s or several h’s can be got together with a fair amount of sequent significance, its end so far is attained. 2, It represents, rather than aught else, a number of thoughts and images passing through the writer’s mind in dreary dimness, when he was only too prone to gloomy impressions. The title itself, “*Chimes*,” prompts us that sound, as truly as sense, has been the guiding clue here. Sections 3, 4, 6, and 7, about the butterfly, love, the breakwater, and the hurricane, must mean very much what they say, and present no real difficulty. Sections 1 and 2, about the bee and the honeysuckle, must adumbrate love-making followed by desertion. Section 5, a trifle more intangible, suggests “the fatal gift of beauty,” with its perils and its mortality. It would be a mistake to expect, in a poem of this description, anything closely knit and reasoned; and again a mistake to think that, lacking that, the poem is mere jingling incoherence.

P. 228.—*TO PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON*.—This sonnet was printed in Mr. William Sharp’s book, “*Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a Record and a Study*.” In line 4 he gives the word “sight.” In the MS. in my own possession I find “light” instead; but I incline to think that Mr. Sharp’s version is correct. I need hardly add that Mr. Marston was blind from a very early period of childhood—a point which the sonnet emphasizes.

P. 229.—*THE LAST THREE FROM TRAFALGAR*.—A lady well known to me by correspondence told me an incident (which pleased me much, and which I venture here to reproduce) regarding this sonnet. She read it to a celebrated General, now a Field-Marshal,—I ought not perhaps to mention the name: it struck him powerfully, and he exclaimed: “I did not think there was any poet of these days who would or could write such a sonnet.”

P. 229.—*MNEMOSYNE*.—This couplet was inscribed on the frame of Rossetti’s picture “*Mnemosyne, or the Lamp of Memory*.”

P. 230.—*JOHN KEATS, ETC.*—I may make a few remarks applicable to the five sonnets collectively upon the “*Five English Poets*” (Rossetti’s heading). 1. Chatterton: His writings (as I have said in my *Preface*) were known to Dante Rossetti to some extent at a very early date: but it was only in his closing years that my brother paid minute

attention to these writings, and then he admired them enormously, and felt a remarkable degree of sympathy with Chatterton, his performances and his personality. Mr. Watts-Dunton coöperated actively to this end.—2, Blake: I need hardly dwell on my brother's early love and study of Blake's work in poetry and design, and on the part he took in connexion with Gilchrist's "Life of Blake." The design by Mr. Shields, referred to in the heading of the sonnet, was reproduced in *The Art-Journal* in 1903. The sonnet refers to two several cupboards, but I can only see one in the design.—3, Coleridge, in certain of his poems—not many amid the entire number of them—was always most deeply admired by Rossetti, and, as years passed, increasingly so. Towards the close of his life he would perhaps have exalted a few of Coleridge's poems above all others produced in that period of our literature. The sonnet testifies to his love of Coleridge: I am not sure that it goes very far towards defining the quality of his excellence.—4, Keats's poetry became first known to Rossetti in 1844, or perhaps 1845. He delighted in it then, and ever afterwards; not however ignoring the imperfection of a large percentage of Keats's work. Perhaps, in his last few years, the poetry of Keats was more constantly present to my brother's thoughts than that of any one else, hardly excepting even Dante.—5, Shelley: According to its heading, this sonnet is an "inscription for the Couch, still preserved, on which he passed the last night of his life." The couch in question is in my possession: it came to me from Edward John Trelawny, and to him from Barone Kirkup of Florence. That Shelley passed the last night of his life on this couch was distinctly affirmed by Trelawny. My brother, even before reading Keats, had read Shelley with the profoundest admiration—a feeling which it would not have been possible for him ever to lose. He was not however so unswervingly loyal to Shelley as to Keats; resenting at times those elements in Shelley's poetry where the abstract tends to lose sight of the concrete, or where revolutionary philanthropy, rather than the world of men and women, is the dominant note. In all poetic literature, anything of a didactic, hortatory, or expressly ethical quality was alien from my brother's liking. That it should be more or less implied was right, but that it should be propounded and preached was wrong: such was his view.

P. 231.—THE DAY-DREAM (For a Picture).—The picture of "The Day-Dream," one of my brother's latest works, is in the Ionides bequest to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

P. 231.—"Still bear young leaflets half the summer through." It has often been alleged that Rossetti's poems show no interest, and no observation or understanding, for the facts and appearances of external nature—landscape, vegetation, and the like. The whole beginning of this sonnet might be cited in disproof of the allegation: and I could point out many other instances *passim*, were they wanted. The fact of the matter is that he constantly saw some appearance in the light of an idea, or in relation to human interest: but still he took count of the appearance.

P. 232.—FOR SPRING, by Sandro Botticelli.—My brother wrote: The same lady, here surrounded by the masque of Spring, is evidently the subject of a portrait by Botticelli formerly in the Pourtalès collection in Paris. This portrait is inscribed "Smeralda Bandinelli."—My brother bought the portrait in question. He afterwards sold it to Mr. Constantine Ionides, from whom it passed to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Leading critics will now have it that the portrait is not the work of Botticelli himself, but of some one for whom they have invented the name "Amico di Sandro."

P. 233.—TIBER, NILE, AND THAMES.—Was at first named "Cleopatra's Needle in London." Was written in January 1881, and sent by Dante Rossetti to Christina, with the message, "With me, sonnets mean insomnia."

P. 233.—“FOUND.”—The facts about the picture named “Found” have often been stated. The work shows how a young woman, inured to vice and sinking into penury, was “found” in the streets of London by her old rustic lover, a drover on his way to market. The subject was designed perhaps as early as 1852, and the painting of it begun in 1854, but never brought to entire completion. The sonnet, on the other hand, is quite a late composition—February 1881.

P. 239.—GOD’S GRAAL.—Rossetti must have projected writing a somewhat long poem thus entitled. The verses come in a notebook in connexion with several pages of prose detail abstracted from the “Mort Arthur.”—The Versicles and Fragments generally are also collected out of notebooks etc. I need not dwell upon them beyond saying that I think them worthy of preservation on one ground or another.

P. 239.—THE ORCHARD-PIT.—This is all that I can find written of a poem which was long and seriously thought of: the argument of the poem is printed among the prose works.

P. 241.—“‘I hate’ says over and above, etc.”—This stanza, and the one which follows, must have been at first intended to figure in the poem “Soothsay.” Likewise the verses “The bitter stage of life” etc. correspond to a passage in the same poem.

P. 242.—“The winter Garden-beds, etc.”—This is used, but with very different diction, in the sonnet “Winter.”

P. 243.—“Thou that beyond thy real self, etc.”—Is versified from a prose phrase, p. 607.

P. 245.—ON THE TWO BRIDAL-BIERS.—Such is the title, although “bridal-bed” comes in the couplet itself. There may have been an intention of writing other couplets wherein the death-bier would figure.

P. 245.—JOAN OF ARC.—These three stanzas are all that I find written of my brother’s projected ballad upon the glorious heroine of France.

P. 245.—“Or, stamped with the snake’s coil, etc.”—Probably this fragment had been intended to be embodied in Rossetti’s sonnet on “The Sonnet.”

P. 246.—DÎS MANIBUS.—Flaubert became so bloated latterly that he could hardly move, and had to wear a special loose costume.—D.G.R.—This sardonic epitaph for Flaubert was written by Rossetti in full consciousness of the literary greatness of the deceased author. He had read “Salammbô” with strong admiration, but with a sense of its being so steeped in cruelty and horror as to be an abnormal and a hardly permissible effort of the historic imagination.

P. 246.—“No ship came near, etc.”—The peculiar rhyme-structure of this stanza shows that it was intended to come into “The Bride’s Prelude.”

P. 249.—MOTTO TO THE CARD-DEALER.—In the first published version of “The Card-dealer,” 1852, this quatrain was supplied as a motto. Though I cannot speak with absolute certainty, I fully believe that the quatrain is Rossetti’s own invention. Am not aware that there is any such book as the “Calendrier de la Vie, 1630.”

P. 249.—MESSER DANTE A MESSER BRUNO.—This sonnet, sent to Madox Brown in a letter of October 24, 1867, is simply a joke—not perhaps a very good one. Brown had written an Italian letter to Rossetti, speaking of Mr. Henry Treffry Dunn, Rossetti’s art-assistant; and taking the surname as if it were “Done,” he translated it into “Fatto.” Rossetti replies, joking on Brown’s name, Ford Mad-ox Brown, and Italianizing it as “Guado Pazzobue Bruno.” He also speaks of Mr. Dunn as a “dun,” a creditor; possibly with truth, or possibly for the mere pun on the name.

P. 249.—CON MANTO D’ORO, etc.—This Italian triplet, and the French couplet, with their translations, were written for a portrait of Mrs. Frederick Leyland painted by Rossetti.

P. 250.—FOR A PORTRAIT OF MRS. WILLIAM MORRIS.—The portrait is the one which hangs in the Tate Gallery at Millbank. Rossetti knew Latin up to a certain point, but I am not wholly sure that he could have indited this couplet. Possibly he obtained the assistance of Mr. Swinburne.

P. 250.—THOMÆ FIDES.—Was intended to come into the dramatic lyric, never executed, of "The Doom of the Sirens."

P. 250.—GIOVENTU E SIGNORIA.—This so-called "Italian Street-song" was really Rossetti's own composition—the Italian as well as the English version. In all the instances in which he wrote a piece in the two languages, the Italian was, I think, the first.

P. 253.—PROSERPINA.—"Afar away the light," etc. It has sometimes been said that the light represented in the "Proserpine" picture is moonlight. This, I am sure, is wholly inconsistent with the general tone and colour of the work: the phrase in the sonnet about "light" seems also clearly to point to sunlight or daylight.

P. 254.—ET LES LARMES, etc.—I am unable to say whether this jotting of verse, which I find in my brother's handwriting, is his own composition, or copied from some book. I assume the former. The same remark applies to "Il faut" etc., in which possibly a rhyme was intended, but in vain; and to the French prose scraps.

P. 254.—PRO HOSTE HOSTEM, etc.—See the Versicle, "I hate, says over and above," etc. This Latin line is evidently related to a phrase in that small piece: it was written, I suppose, afterwards. It must have been intended for a hexameter, but, as any one can see, it will not scan.

P. 259.—SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF ALGERNON R. G. STANHOPE.—This is a juvenile affair, bearing the date of September 1847; which was however some few months later than the date of the original "Blessed Damozel." It is about the only thing which my brother wrote "to order": i.e. he was requested by a family friend, Cavalier Mortara, to write some verses commemorative of a youthful member of the Stanhope family, known to Mortara but not to Rossetti, and he produced these verses as an act of complaisance. The full composition numbers 21 stanzas: I think that ten of them, but not more, may at this distant period be allowed to figure among the *Juvenilia* of his Collected Works. I am afraid my brother would not have approved even this modicum of publicity.

P. 260.—AN EPITAPH FOR KEATS.—The date of these verses may be much the same as that of the Stanhope composition.

P. 260.—TO MARY IN SUMMER.—This also is a juvenile effusion. It is a mere exercise of fancy, for in those early summers there was no real Mary of any denomination. The composition was originally longer, but was reduced by the author to its present dimensions. He did not view it with entire disfavour: when he was compiling his volume of 1870 he seriously debated whether to include it or not, but he decided against it.

P. 261.—THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION OF 1848.—This will readily be understood to relate to the Chartist or pseudo-Chartist meetings which formed a transitory alarm to Londoners in the early months of 1848. Readers whose memories go back to that date will appreciate the references to Moses and Son, puny John (Russell), Cochrane, G. W. M. Reynolds and "Reynolds's Miscellany," etc.: for other readers they seem hardly worth explaining. It may be as well to say that my brother had no real grounded objection to the principles of "The People's Charter"—I dare say he never knew accurately what they were: but he disliked bluster and blusterers, noise-mongers and noise, and he has here indulged himself in a fling at them.

P. 263.—THE SIN OF DETECTION.—This is a sonnet written to *touts-rimés*: so are the thirteen sonnets which ensue. The rhyme-words were given by me; and my brother then rattled off the sonnet

as fast as he could—sometimes in five or six minutes—more usually from eight to ten. He at the same time gave me rhyme-words, and I acted alike. This practice went on actively in 1848: it may have begun in 1847, and died out in 1849. I think his bouts-rimés sonnets are clever things of their kind: each of them has its own point of view, and suggests some sort of situation with a certain picturesque intensity of notion and diction, and sometimes a degree of subtlety. But one cannot demand from such a mere *tour de force* more than is permitted by its very nature, which consists of slapdash at a moment's notice.

P. 267.—“’T WAS THUS.”—This quatrain is *intended* to be a bombastic absurdity. “Hunt and I,” said a letter from my brother on August 20, 1848, “went the other night to Woolner’s, where we composed a poem of twenty-four stanzas on the alternate system. I transcribe the last stanza, which was mine, to show you the style of thing.”

P. 268.—ON BROWNING’S SORDELLO.—This is the beginning of a sonnet. I recollect the octave accurately, but cannot recall the sextett, which was written from a quite contrary point of view—that of a devotee of Browning and “Sordello,” as my brother was in all those years. The reader may remember that “Sordello” begins with the phrase “Who will may hear Sordello’s story told,” and ends with “Who would has heard Sordello’s story told.” Hence my brother’s opening lines.

P. 268.—THE CANCAN AT VALENTINO’S.—This is one of the sonnets which my brother sent to me from Paris. I have had to omit some lines, not presentable in print. He was profoundly disgusted with the coarse revelling at Valentino’s dancing-hall, and recorded the aspect of the danseuses in his sonnet.

P. 269.—AT THE STATION OF THE VERSAILLES RAILWAY.—It will be perceived that the opening lines are imitated from those of Tennyson’s poem “Godiva.”

P. 269.—L’ENVOI.—The phrase “It’s copied out at last” relates to the snatches of blank verse, “From Paris to Brussels” and “On the Road to Belgium.” “The sonnet at the close” is the one entitled “Returning to Brussels.”

P. 270.—VERSES TO JOHN L. TUPPER.—The nicknames which appear towards the close of this doggerel indicate—The Prince, George Tupper; the Baron, his brother Alexander; Spectro-cadaveral Rex, John (or Jack) Tupper; the Maniac, Holman Hunt. These rather silly nicknames were not Dante Rossetti’s invention. The occasion for the doggerel appears to have been that he had received an invitation to join with Hunt, Stephens, and the three Tupperes, in a brief country-tramp.

P. 271.—ST. WAGNES’ EVE.—For this amusing trifle some explanations are needed. Rossetti had taken a first-floor studio in a house in Newman Street in which a dancing-academy was held: this he terms “the hop-shop.” Hancock’s “accents screechy” are not an arbitrary make-rhyme to “Beatrice” (according to the Italian pronunciation of that name), but a tolerably true definition of Hancock’s voice, which was small and high-pitched. He was now doing a statue of Dante’s Beatrice. The “engraving of his bas-relief” was an Art-union engraving of a work of his, “Christ’s Entry into Jerusalem.” Bernhard Smith, another sculptor, was a very fine-looking young man. North was William North, a somewhat eccentric young literary man, of very extreme opinions, author of “The Infinite Republic,” etc. The names of two painters, Collinson and Deverell, hardly require explanation.

P. 271.—PARODY ON “UNCLE NED.”—The object here, as will be seen, is to ridicule Mrs. Stowe’s romance “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”: a book far from deserving of mere ridicule, and one which possibly my

brother never read. "Uncle Ned" is a nigger song, perhaps still well known, beginning "Dere was an old nigger and him name was Uncle Ned, And him died long long ago." My brother had no very settled ideas about negroes, their rights and wrongs: he knew, and was much tickled by, Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question," published in 1849.

P. 271.—DUNS SCOTUS.—By the name Duns Scotus, Rossetti designated the painter William Bell Scott. The notion that he might "die of lotus" applied to his position as settled in Newcastle-on-Tyne, isolated from the more strenuous movements in art and literature. See some other raileries against Scott among the limericks.

P. 272.—MACCRACKEN.—This parody of Tennyson's youthful quasi-sonnet "The Kraken" refers to Mr. Francis MacCracken of Belfast, a business-man who purchased, in the early Præraphæelite days, some of the paintings of Holman Hunt, Rossetti, etc. Rossetti really felt indebted to MacCracken for buying these works cheap, when other people would not buy them at all: but in this parody, following the titular and other wording, or sometimes the mere sound, of Tennyson's piece, he pretends that the Belfast connoisseur preyed insidiously upon his artistic victims. The parody is a very complete thing in its way: as the reader would find if he were to compare its lines and terms with those of Tennyson's "Kraken."

P. 272.—VALENTINE TO LIZZIE SIDDAL.—From 1852 to 1862 Rossetti lived in Chambers in Chatham Place, Blackfriars Bridge. Hence the references in this Valentine to St. Paul's Cathedral and the Thames.

P. 273.—ADDRESS TO THE DALZIEL BROTHERS.—Rossetti, put out by imperfect woodcutting of his designs for Tennyson's poems, scribbled these lines in a letter which he addressed to W. B. Scott. He had probably some tolerable reason for being put out: though we may none the less acknowledge that the Dalziels were very skilful craftsmen.

P. 273.—THE WOMBAT.—Rossetti purchased a wombat (Australian burrowing animal) which arrived at his house in London when he was away in Scotland. He wrote this stave to express his eagerness to see the beast.

P. 273.—LIMERICKS.—A good deal has by this time been written about limericks composed by Rossetti and by some of his acquaintances: I need not repeat the substance of it. In my present compilation Nos. 1 and 2 refer to Valentine C. Prinsep; No. 3 to Henry Tanworth Wells; No. 4 to Arthur Hughes; No. 5 to the architect William Burges; No. 6 to Lady Burne-Jones; Nos. 7 and 8 to Burne-Jones; No. 9 to a painter, George W. Chapman, not now well remembered; No. 10 to Whistler; No. 11 to the Bookseller and Publisher F. S. Ellis; No. 12 to Charles Augustus Howell; No. 13 to J. W. Inchbold; No. 14 to Ford Madox Brown; No. 15 to Oliver Madox Brown; No. 16 to T. and W. Agnew; No. 17 to Francis Hueffer; Nos. 18, 19, and 20, to William Bell Scott; No. 21 to Arthur O'Shaughnessy; No. 22 to J. W. Knewstubb, a painter who had studied under Rossetti; No. 23 to Rossetti himself; and No. 24 to Robert Buchanan. Every now and then something is alleged in these limericks (or "nonsense-verses" as we then called them) which has no relation whatever to fact. For instance, in No. 6 there was the name Georgie: a rhyme being wanted, "orgy" was stuffed in, and no one minded the absolute lie, because it was known to be a lie. My brother must certainly have composed many other limericks, which either I never knew of, or else they have lapsed out of my memory.

P. 276.—WILLIAM MORRIS.—This couplet was written one day at Kelmscott when Morris did some fishing with no success. The name "Skald" was bestowed upon him because, in a recent excursion in Iceland, he had been set down in the inn-register as "William Morris, Skald."

P. 276.—THE BROTHERS.—This parody of Tennyson's fine poem "The Sisters" was written soon after Rossetti had learned that the adverse criticism of his poems, published in *The Contemporary Review* with the signature "Thomas Maitland," was the work of Mr. Robert Buchanan. There are in the parody many ingenious imitations of phrase and sound. A notion of printing it in *The Pall Mall Gazette* was started, but not carried out.

P. 277.—SMITHEREENS.—I don't know what may have prompted my brother to write these verses, not highly Rossettian: possibly he had heard of some incident of a like kind.

P. 277.—COUPLET ON CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.—Was the beginning of a limerick, left uncompleted.

P. 310.—"An awkward *intermezzo* to the volume." The term "*intermezzo*" was correct when my brother wrote it; because his introduction, regarding Dante and his friends, appeared in the *middle* of the original volume entitled "The Early Italian Poets, 1861." On republishing the book in 1874, my brother inverted the order of his translations, and made those taken from Dante and his friends to appear in the opening pages of the volume. The word "*intermezzo*" ought then to have disappeared; it must have been left through inadvertence.

P. 313.—"This sonnet is divided," etc. It may be as well to mention that the expositions (of which this is the first) appended to the various poems of the "*Vita Nuova*" were translated by me, not by my brother. Several foot-notes are also mine. The translation of the "*Vita Nuova*" had been done by my brother at a very early date, probably 1847-8; when he was more inclined to consult his own preferences in the way of translating than to be at the rigid beck of his original. When he had to prepare the work, 1860, for publication, he felt that he had taken too great a liberty, and asked me to supply what was wanted in relation to these expositions, etc.

P. 359.—OF A CONSECRATED IMAGE RESEMBLING HIS LADY.—There is not in this Italian sonnet anything to indicate that Cavalcanti considered the Image to resemble "his Lady"—*i.e.* the woman he was in love with. He speaks of "*la Donna mia*," which comes to the same thing as "*la Madonna*," the Virgin Mary. That the Image did really represent the Virgin Mary is apparent from the reply which Guido Orlandi returned to this sonnet.

P. 361.—DANTE TO CAVALCANTI.—This sunny-tempered sonnet was translated also by Shelley.

P. 367.—BERNARDO DA BOLOGNA.—No other writing by Bernardo appears to be known, nor any detail of his life. The original sonnet is densely obscure, and a semi-creative effort was needed on Rossetti's part for making what he has here made of it.

P. 410.—"Aguglino would be eaglet," etc. Here again my brother is at fault. Aguglino does indeed mean eaglet: it is the name of a coin stamped (I presume) with the imperial eagle. There can be no real doubt that Aguglino is the correct reading; and that the whole of my brother's surmise about "Avolino" is gratuitous. I pointed this out to him when the book was in course of reprinting. He then admitted the fact; but (with perhaps pardonable weakness for what he had many years before thought out with ingenuity, and argued with plausibility) he ultimately decided not to interfere with the text as printed.

P. 413.—OF HIS LAST SIGHT OF FIAMMETTA.—The reader may notice that this sonnet bears a certain relation to Rossetti's own sonnet, "*Fiammetta*," as more especially to the picture which those verses illustrate. Fiammetta, named in many of Boccaccio's writings, is reputed to have been a member (not legitimate) of the royal family of Naples.

P. 415.—POETS CHIEFLY BEFORE DANTE.—In 1908 was published

a very convenient little book—"Italian Poets chiefly before Dante: the Italian Text, with Translations by D. G. Rossetti" (Shakespeare Head Press, Stratford-on-Avon). I then for the first time compared the translations minutely with the originals; knowing that I should be sure to find some mistakes and some difference of tone—for my brother certainly enhanced, beyond his originals, the qualities of romantic richness and picturesque colouring. I made several notes on particular poems or passages, and I here present a few of them.

P. 425.—"If by my grief thou couldst be grieved, God send me a grief soon." Rossetti has mistaken the "person" here. The true meaning is—"Nay, wert thou in pain, and falling down in anguish."

P. 426.—"Oh the rich dress thou worst on that day," etc. The Italian runs "*ti vististi lo traïuto*." I suspect that the *traïuto* (or *traito*, as in the next stanza—words which I cannot find in an Italian dictionary) is quite the reverse of a rich dress, and is the habit of a conventual novice, for there are clear indications in the poem that the lady contemplates becoming a nun. All the expressions in the ensuing stanza as to richness of her costume are not in the original: which says: "Ah so much didst thou fall in love, down from the *traito*, as if it had been purple, scarlet, or samite."

P. 428.—"Going from bough to bough"—in the original "*agli albori*." This must mean "at dawn," but Rossetti took it to mean "in the trees"—which would be "*alberi*."

P. 437.—"I would not have ye without counsel ta'en," etc. The rendering is considerably different from the original, which runs thus: "I commend not beginning without deliberation; nor is it to my liking to give praise to one who commits an offence. He who condescends to this falls under great reprehension: and he who is silent is content not to outstep him who can give a good reason, for he acts justly who comes when there is occasion for it. If the man confides in good counsel, he goes upward; and he props himself upon folly, going downward. The fruit approves the flower when the season comes." The "loud-voiced mime" is Rossetti's invention.

P. 442.—"And is there nothing else," etc. The literal sense of the original is this: "And therefore, if it were to appear to you that there would not be any one else to gain your love, never lose your joy. Would you then have friendship? Sooner would I die."

P. 451.—"Yet, if any heart be a city," etc. This is very paraphrastical, or even incorrect. The original must mean: "If there is any one who receives love, he maintains his heart in joy, he always lives in blitheness."

P. 455.—"But should go back against his proper will." It should be "*Nor* should go back," etc.

P. 457.—"His ill thought should withhold." The original indicates "*Her* ill thought."

P. 463.—"Ye blew your bubbles as the falcon flies." Rossetti's word "bubbles" stands for the Italian "*bubbole*," but quite erroneously. "*Bubbole*" means "*lapwings*" and the line signifies "Ye have turned lapwings into falcons." I think too that the sextett of this sonnet has been rather misapprehended.

P. 467.—"Gules, argent, or." These heraldic terms are substituted for the names of real flowers, "violets, roses, and flowers, to dazzle all men." I have no doubt that the Italian poet referred not to any armorial devices, but to the actual flower-garlands (*ghirlande*, as in l. 11) which the ladies would cast down.

P. 468.—"On each hand either ridge ye shall perceive." The word rendered as "ridge" is "*terra*": but it is pretty clear that "*terra*" bears here a sense which it often assumes in Italian—town, or fortress.

P. 469.—"Gifts from man to man." The word "gifts" represents "*dati*," and as such is admissible: but I think the real meaning is

"dice"—"dadi" being the ordinary Italian word. The phrase stands "star coi dati in mano."

P. 471.—"Wednesday the day of Feasts." The whole of this sonnet relates, in my opinion, to feasting—not any part of it to sporting.

P. 472.—"As up and down you course the steep highway." The line does not really refer to the sportsman, but to the falcons—"to swoop down, and to soar to a great height."

P. 472.—TO LOVE AND TO HIS LADY.—Lines 6 and 7 relate to the assassins, or adherents of the Old Man of the Mountain—which Rossetti does not appear to have observed.

P. 473.—"Still inmost I love thee." This represents "*È l'amo dentro*," which really means "The hook is inside me." Rossetti heedlessly supposed "*amo*" to be the verb "I love."

P. 476.—"My lady and my lord." The word translated "lady" is "*donn*"—which does not here stand for *donna* (lady), but for *donno*, master (i.e. Love).

P. 482.—"Even as the moon amid the stars." Rossetti found the word "*diana*," which he supposed to be the goddess Diana, translated "moon." But the real meaning is "*the stella diana*," or daystar.

P. 492.—"Him by mischance a servant of his own Hit with an arrow." This passage, relating to William Rufus, has the Italian phrase "*Ferito a inganno*"—which certainly means "wounded by treachery," not "by mischance."

P. 493.—"That he was frank and good [King Stephen]." The Italian word is "*franco*"; which, though it does in some cases mean "frank," is often used to signify "brave, courageous": and one may be pretty sure that such is the meaning here.

P. 493.—"Leaving the Sepulchre to join his host." Fazio's statement, regarding Richard Cœur de Lion, is "*Tornando dal sepolcro alla sua schiatta*"; which certainly does not mean "his host," but "his compatriots." This is followed by "who being dead": but the Italian phrase "*Costui fù morto*" conveys the more precise sense "He was slain."

P. 494.—FRANCO SACCHETTI (two Poems).—I find that the second of these specimens has been attributed by some to Sacchetti, by others to Ugolino Ubaldini.

P. 496.—"The nightingales that sing 'Fly away O die away.'" It may be interesting to some readers to know that in Sacchetti's Italian the song of the nightingale runs "*Più bel ve', più bel ve'*": which may be rendered, "Still prettier—look:" or else "Something there is still prettier."

P. 501.—LENORE, translated from Bürger. This appears to be the earliest translation made by Dante Rossetti from any author: its date is in or about June 1844, when he was just turned of sixteen. The leading translators of an earlier date had been William Taylor of Norwich, Walter Scott, W. R. Spencer, Pye the Poet Laureate, and F. Shoberl. It is said too that Shelley towards 1817 made a translation (A. Koszul, *La Jeunesse de Shelley*, 1910). Later than Rossetti's rendering came those of Julia Cameron and John Oxenford. The German Author, Gottfried August Bürger, was born in 1748, and died, after an agitated career, in 1784: he published "*Lenore*" towards 1775.

P. 507.—HENRY THE LEPER.—My brother learned German at home, beginning towards 1843, under the tuition of an excellent teacher and excellent man, Dr. Adolf Heimann, the Professor in University College. He was soon fired with a wish to translate some German poems. He Englished (as we have seen) Bürger's "*Lenore*"; and, beginning in 1845, the earlier portion of the "*Nibelungenlied*." The latter translation has perished. He then took up the ancient poem by Hartmann von Auë, "*Der Arme Heinrich*." My brother was not dissatisfied with it in later years, and more than once thought of putting it into

print, but did not actually do so. Longfellow re-adapted "Der Arme Heinrich" in his "Golden Legend," published in 1851.

P. 535.—TWO LYRICS, FROM NICCOLÒ TOMMASEO.—When Tommaseo's death was announced, Rossetti sent these versions (of an early date) to the *Athenæum* (June 13, 1874), with the following prefatory lines:—"In your late obituary notice (*Athenæum*, May 16), of Niccolò Tommaseo, a passing allusion is made to his earlier lyrical poetry. Any countryman of his, looking, years ago when it appeared, into the slender collection of these verses, must have been struck by their not being chiefly concerned with public events and interests; inevitably a rare exception in those dark yearning-days of the Italian Muse. Perhaps the two translated specimens which I offer of their delicate and romantic tone may not be unacceptable to some of your readers."

P. 537.—LINES FROM THE ROMAN DE LA ROSE.—The original begins "Tendre eut la chair comme rousée, Simple fut comme une épousée." Rossetti, in translating "une épousée" as "a wife," certainly made an error: the word must mean "a bride," or more probably "an affianced damsel." To say that a certain woman was "as simple as a wife" conveys no distinct sense; for a wife is not any more simple (rather less so) than an unmarried woman.

P. 537.—POEMS BY FRANCESCO AND GAETANO POLIDORI.—This article was published in *The Critic* for April 1, 1853. Gaetano Polidori was our maternal grandfather, and was still alive, aged about eighty-nine, when this notice appeared (as its own terms indicate). My brother has, in his translations in this article, improved—such at least is my opinion—upon the originals.

P. 541.—A DOCTOR'S ADVICE.—My brother found some verses, in ill-spelled French, scratched on the pane of a window at the New Inn, Winchelsea. They were signed "N.B., Queen Square, 1771," and began "Mon Médecin me dit souvent." He made this translation of the verses.

P. 541.—"My lady, as God made you," etc. I presume that these lines are translated from something. They must certainly, in one way or another, be the doing of Rossetti, as he has altered in his manuscript the word "thee" into "you."

P. 541.—LILITH, FROM GOETHE.—When my brother was projecting his picture of "Lilith," towards 1866, he asked me to copy out for him the lines from the Brocken-scene in "Faust," along with Shelley's translation of them. I did so. I find my transcript pasted into one of his note-books, along with this quatrain as translated by himself. As it has some interest of association, I reproduce it here.

P. 544.—THE LEAF.—LEOPARDI.—Thus entitled in my brother's own volume. But the lyric, as given by Leopardi, is only a translation from the French of Millevoye.

P. 549.—HAND AND SOUL.—This story—which, brief though it is, may rank as the most considerable prose-writing by Rossetti apart from what appears in "The Early Italian Poets"—was written in December 1849, almost entirely in one night, or rather earliest morning (see Mr. Caine's "Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," p. 134). It is purely a work of imagination; there never was a Chiaro dell' Erma, nor a Dr. Aemmster, nor the rest of them. The story was published in *The Germ*; and I have heard of more than one admirer of it who made enquiry in Florence or Dresden after the pictures of Chiaro—of course with no result save disappointment. The statement on page 555, "In the spring of 1847 I was at Florence," is also fictitious, though it has sometimes been cited as showing (contrary to the general and correct statement) that Rossetti had once at least been in Italy. Rather fanciful constructions have at times been put upon this story—its central significance etc. Rossetti gives us to understand that the proper business of a painter is to "paint his soul": and this, I think, means simply that he should act upon the promptings

of his own mind and feelings in selecting his themes and in the mode of treating them. If he faithfully follows his own genuine inspirations, he will be fulfilling his pictorial duty.

P. 557.—*ST. AGNES OF INTERCESSION*.—This fragmentary tale forms, I think, no unworthy pendent to "Hand and Soul." It does not seem to be intended to bear an equal weight of moral or spiritual significance; but is not less imaginative, and its style of writing, if simpler and less resolutely sustained, seems to me fully as noticeable and individual. My brother intended to publish it in *The Germ*; and would doubtless have done so, had that magazine been less short-lived. He began an etching to illustrate it; but threw this aside in disgust at his failure in technique. Sir John Millais then undertook to execute the etching. His production was included in the great Millais Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1886, and manifestly represents the hero of the story painting the portrait of his affianced bride during her mortal illness. This, therefore, is clearly shown to be the intended *finale* of the tale; as indeed one might readily divine from that portion of it which was written. At a later date Rossetti himself painted the like incident, in its mediæval phase, under the title of "Bonifazio's Mistress." The written portion of the tale may be surmised to constitute less than half of the projected whole: my brother, according to Mr. Caine, indicated, in talking to that gentleman, that it would only be about a third. At some much later date, perhaps towards 1870, my brother turned his thoughts again to this tale, and transcribed the earlier pages of it; and he again paid some attention to it in the last two or three months of his life, but without writing anything additional, or even revising the extant portion. The reader may observe that the name in the title, "St. Agnes of Intercession," does not re-appear in the course of the story, where the picture itself comes to be spoken of: it was only adopted towards the time when the beginning of the tale was transcribed. My brother also intended to substitute the name "Davanzati" for "Angiolieri"; but (in order to avoid tampering with an untranscribed passage printed on page 562) I have found it requisite to retain "Angiolieri." Something in the nature of actual reminiscence may be traced in the opening details; as that of our father singing old revolutionary and other songs, and of the author leaving school early to study the painter's art. The motto from "Tristram Shandy" would not, I believe, be discoverable upon the most diligent turning-over of the pages of that now too seldom read classic, which fascinated my brother greatly at a date not much earlier than the commencement of this tale: I regard it as his own.

The first draft of "St. Agnes of Intercession" begins with the following paragraph—discarded when my brother made his transcript towards 1870. I preserve it here, as being, in its dim way, a true sketch of our father. Where I write "Italy," my brother wrote "Poland," or afterwards "France." "My father had settled in England only a few years before I was born to him. He was one of that vast multitude of exiles who, almost from lustrum to lustrum for a season of nearly a century, have been scattered from Italy over all Europe—over the world indeed. Few among these can have less of riches than he had, wherein to seek happiness; but I believe that there are still fewer who could be so happy as he was, without riches, in exile and labour."

P. 570.—*EXHIBITION OF MODERN BRITISH ART AT THE OLD WATER-COLOUR GALLERY*.—In the earliest days of my brother's professional career as a painter, it occasionally happened to him to write a notice or critique of some particular picture. The main incentive was that I was in 1850 the art-critic of *The Critic*, and, for some years from the autumn of the same year, of *The Spectator*: and my brother felt minded now and again to express some opinion of his own, which was inserted into an article of mine. In December 1850 he wrote for *The Critic* the preliminary remarks, here reprinted, on an exhibition of

sketches at the Old Water-colour Gallery. Again, in August 1851, while I was out of town, he obliged me by writing for *The Spectator* an exhibition-review (on some pictures at LICHFIELD HOUSE) which happened then to fall due. The last-named article was followed by another on an EXHIBITION OF SKETCHES AND DRAWINGS, IN PALL MALL EAST.

P. 572.—FRANK STONE: SYMPATHY, 1850.—I have here collected the few notices of individual works by particular artists which my brother included (as mentioned in the previous note) in articles of mine published in *The Critic* and *The Spectator*. Some of the works, and even of the artists, are now forgotten: in one instance (that of Mr. Lucy) my brother's estimate may have been a little biased by friendly good-will. I may be allowed to add that although he contributed these notices bodily to articles of mine, he never had any hand whatever in my own critiques; they were written without any suggestion or concurrence or pre-discussion on his part; also that he by no means contemplated any general plan of reviewing his professional brethren in the tone of a literary free-lance. The notices here reproduced belong to the very early years of 1850 and 1851, with a single exception, that of Palmer. This last-named notice consists of two scraps written towards 1875 and 1881, which were eventually published by Mr. L. R. Valpy (to whom they were addressed) in his critical catalogue of a series of Palmer's works. Of the artists thus individually reviewed by my brother, five were then known to him personally,—Anthony, Lucy, Madox Brown, Holman Hunt, and Palmer; the others were unknown,—Frank Stone, Hook, Branwhite, F. R. Pickersgill, C. H. Lear, Kennedy, Cope, Landseer, Marochetti, and Poole. C. H. Lear must, I presume, have died early: he is not to be confounded with Edward Lear, the landscape-painter and traveller, author of "The Book of Nonsense."

P. 583.—MADOX BROWN.—The observation that Mr. Brown adopted for the head of his Chaucer "a portraiture less familiar" etc. deserves note. The fact is that Rossetti himself sat for the head of Chaucer; which head is really a good likeness of Rossetti, although the painter took care that it should also bear some sufficiently recognizable resemblance to the accepted type of Chaucer's countenance. The picture, a very large one, is now in the Public Gallery of Sydney, Australia.

P. 586.—DEUCED ODD.—This fragment stops short before the story gets fairly started. The tone of writing, proper to the supposed author, a "legitimate" actor, seems to be well sustained. I forget what the gist of the story was to have been: certainly the devil was to bear some part in it. I consider that my brother's incitement towards writing a tale about an actor and the devil arose partly from his reading some years previously, in *Hood's Magazine*, a very effective story about the devil acting his own part in some piece of diablerie such as "Der Freischütz." We never knew who the author of that narrative may have been.

P. 587.—LANCELOT AND GUENEVERE.—In this scrap we find five subjects from the tale of Lancelot, Galahad, and the Holy Grail. Except the first subject, Rossetti painted or designed all these in one form or another. Perhaps he made his jotting with a view to combining the whole series in some mode of publication.

P. 587.—WILLIAM BLAKE.—These observations are taken from the "Life of Blake" by Alexander Gilchrist, edition of 1880: the large majority of them appeared also in the original edition, 1863. I need only say here that my brother knew, and had a very sincere regard for, Mr. Gilchrist, who died in 1861, as he was nearing the close of his excellent and now widely appreciated labours on the "Life." Rossetti supplied him with some important materials, but not with any contributory writing of his own. After Gilchrist's death, his widow also worked to very good purpose upon the task; but she thought it

desirable to avail herself of my brother's assistance in certain defined portions of the subject, especially the arranging and editing of the poems. I here give the remarks of my brother upon the poems; preceded by his "supplementary chapter" to the "Life," and followed by his comments upon the Designs to the "Book of Job," and upon certain points connected with the designs to the "Jerusalem." Part of this last section ("Jerusalem") belongs only to the edition of 1880. In the "supplementary chapter" a few of the opening phrases must, I consider, be Mr. Gilchrist's own: I have not been at the pains of detaching them. Nothing else of any substantial bulk or importance was written by my brother for Gilchrist's book. The present owner of the copyright handsomely made me free in 1886 to reproduce my brother's contribution.

P. 605.—SCRAPS.—I give here four casual jottings, noted down in a writing-book of my brother: the date of 1866 may apply more or less nearly to the items. No. 1 is a skit upon the title, "Essays written in the Intervals of Business," of a book then much in vogue, done by Sir Arthur Helps.

P. 605.—THE RETURN OF TIBULLUS TO DELIA.—This memorandum describes a picture painted by Rossetti towards 1866; water-colour, and I believe oil-colour as well.

P. 606.—SENTENCES AND NOTES.—Picked out *passim* from my brother's note-books. The only date which I have given, 1866, may be about the earliest date of any of these jottings. They go on till towards the close of his life. Other sentences etc., of much the same kind as those published in 1886, follow on in the present edition.

P. 607.—A GROUND-SWELL.—Another jotting from a small note-book. Possibly written when Rossetti was at Penkill Castle, near Ailsa Craig, in 1869, or 1868.

P. 607.—THE ORCHARD PIT.—This is the prose narrative written with a view to the composition of a poem: see p. 239.

P. 610.—THE DOOM OF THE SIRENS.—My brother, I am sure, schemed out this "lyrical tragedy" with a feeling that it might really be made to constitute the words (*libretto*) of a musical opera. He regarded the project indeed with some eagerness at one time: he had not, I fancy, any clearly defined idea as to a musician to co-operate with him, but thought vaguely of our friend Dr. Franz Hueffer. The date of the composition may be nearly the same as that of "The Orchard Pit," but rather later.

P. 613.—PICTURES BY DEVERELL—A RAFFLE.—As Deverell died in 1854, which is here stated to be sixteen years prior to the proposed raffle, the notice must have been drawn up in 1870. I think the raffle came off, but do not recollect the result.

P. 613.—SILENCE—for a Design.—"Silence" was one of Rossetti's best chalk-drawings, the sitter being Mrs. William Morris. He meant to paint the subject, but did not succeed in so doing.

P. 613.—EBENEZER JONES.—From *Notes and Queries*, February 5, 1870. This was an answer to a question asked by Mr. Gledstanew-Waugh.

P. 614.—SUBJECTS FOR PICTURES.—I here give various jottings written in my brother's note-books. Towards 1870 may be something like their approximate date. I think the only one of these subjects which he ever actually took up, and that only in an initial stage, was "Pietra degli Scrovigni" (from Dante). The subject of "Mandetta" will be better understood upon reference to the poems of Guido Cavalcanti.

P. 616.—MICHAEL SCOTT'S WOOING.—See the note (p. 668) to the verses bearing the same title. The present project of a poem, or perhaps rather of a prose-story, is entirely different in its incidents from any of the designs which Rossetti made of "Michael Scott's Wooing"—so far at least as my knowledge of them extends. From the character

of the handwriting I judge this skeleton-narrative to be two or three years later than "The Orchard Pit," etc.

P. 617.—THE STEALTHY SCHOOL OF CRITICISM.—This article, a reply to "The Fleshly School of Poetry," was published in the *Athenæum* for December 16, 1871. "The Fleshly School of Poetry" was (as observed in my Preface) an article in the *Contemporary Review*, written by Mr. Robert Buchanan, and published under the pseudonym "Thomas Maitland." Subsequently to the printing of my brother's rejoinder, the *Contemporary* article was enlarged by its author, and re-issued in pamphlet-form. Mr. Buchanan has since publicly admitted that it was totally unjust to Rossetti: whether it was or was not (even apart from its pseudonymity) a profligate act of literary spite under the disguise of moral purism is a question which I leave to the judgment of others. Having been revoked, be the act condoned—so far at least as I am concerned. My brother refers prominently to a sonnet in "The House of Life" named "Nuptial Sleep": this point also is touched upon in my Notes. Later on in the article he adverts to sonnets 29, 30, 31, 39, 40, 41, and 43. In the present arrangement of "The House of Life," these are sonnets 63, "Inclusiveness," 65, "Known in Vain," 67, "The Landmark," 85, "Vain Virtues," 86, "Lost Days," 87, "Death's Songsters," and 91, "Lost on Both Sides."

P. 621.—HAKE'S MADELINE, AND OTHER POEMS.—This critique comes from the *Academy* of February 1 1871. The ensuing critique, of the same author's PARABLES AND TALES, is from the *Fortnightly Review*, April 1873.

P. 627.—MACLISE'S CHARACTER-PORTRAITS.—Printed in the *Academy* for April 15, 1871.

P. 635.—PROSERPINA.—Relates to the oil-picture completed towards 1874. See the sonnets on the same picture.

P. 635.—SCRAPS.—These come from note-books which must have been in use from 1871 to 1875. No. 3, on Dickens, is somewhat harshly expressed. But it should be understood as meant epigrammatically rather than abusively, for Rossetti was in fact a very hearty admirer of Dickens. No. 9 is utilized in "Soothsay." No. 15 shows that, when he wrote this, he thought of bringing out an autotyped series of his heads drawn from Mrs. William Morris: he did not do so.

P. 637.—SCRAPS.—The note-book from which these extracts come was in use towards the close of 1879, and no doubt rather earlier and rather later.

P. 637.—"There are certain passionate phases," etc. This prose axiom is embodied elsewhere in a verse.

P. 637.—"Whosoever be of all men," etc. Versified (the first phrase, but not the rest) at p. 239.

P. 638.—NOTES UPON A LIFE OF DAVID SCOTT, R.S.A.—The book here in question bears the following engraved title: "Memoir of David Scott, R.S.A., containing his Journal in Italy, Notes on Art, and other papers. With seven illustrations. By William B. Scott.—Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1850."—My brother read this book as soon as it came out; but his notes are of a far later date, say 1878–79. David Scott was a remarkable painter, a man of intellect and a very capable writer, born in October 1806, and deceased in March 1849. The biographer, William Bell Scott, was his brother. Most of Rossetti's notes (I only print the more important of them) are hostile to something done or written by David Scott: but in fact he entertained a very hearty admiration of him from some points of view, intellectual as well as pictorial. As to this see p. 591. In my present text I quote several passages written by David Scott, some of them in a condensed form, followed by the comments of Rossetti. His comments are arbitrary and offhand, and often expressed in terms which he would have modified, had he been writing for publication. I think them however worthy of preservation, especially on the ground

that they mostly relate to matters of fine art, as to which not very much appears in the writings of Rossetti generally, painter though he was. Here we have some observations (I name them in the order which they happen to occupy in the text) on the Florentine painters before Michelangelo, Rubens, Guido, Michelangelo, Spagnoletto, Caravaggio, Giovanni Bellini, Etty, Raphael, the Apollo Belvedere, Pompeian paintings, Turner, Tintoret, Sebastian del Piombo, Girodet, Carpaccio, Leonardo da Vinci, Masaccio, and Albani—not to speak of David Scott himself. Some other artists are named in those notes, mostly very slight, which I have not considered to be adapted for reproduction in the text.

P. 642.—SUBJECT FOR PICTURE—ROUND TOWER AT JHANSI.—It was probably owing to Christina Rossetti's short and moving poem on this theme (a terrible incident in the Indian Mutiny) that my brother thought of it as a subject for a picture.

P. 642.—NOTE ON BALLAD, SIR HUGH THE HERON.—I think the friend mentioned at the beginning of this note was Mr. Hall Caine. My brother wrote in terms somewhat exaggerated, and not wholly accurate. Long before the age of twelve he had read various poets besides Walter Scott: I need only name Shakespear and Byron.

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